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SCIENCE AND IMMORTALITY

SCIENCE AND IMMORTALITY

BY

SIR OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.

NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY
1908

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Hugh Dabbs

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PREFATORY NOTE TO AMERICAN EDITION.

This book is based upon articles by the author which have appeared in the *Hibbert Journal* and in the *Contemporary Review,* and incorporates the substance of many of those articles; but they have been revised, in parts re-written, added to, and amended, so as to develop a continuous treatment.

They are arranged in four sections or divisions:—

The first treats of the old problems of science and faith, of belief in the miraculous, and in the efficacy of prayer; and adduces justification for some of those beliefs.

The second is mainly concerned with what are commonly considered Ecclesiastical matters—that is to say with Church organisation and with Public Service of all kinds.

The third concerns what is called the Future Life, and treats of the Immortality of the Soul.

The fourth represents the interaction between Science and Christianity. This part aims at expounding the fundamental Christian doctrines from a modern and scientific point of view, and at showing how ancient modes of expression, and the mediæval language in which are embodied the most vital

truths known to mankind, can be interpreted and assimilated by advanced thought.

A threat of unauthorised publication of some of the Hibbert articles, as they stand, has been received from America; but if any such publication appears, readers are hereby informed that it will not be the edited and authorised edition, but a mere reprint of unselected and unrevised material.

OLIVER LODGE.

University of Birmingham.
May 1908.

PREFACE

IT is difficult for a lay individual to suppose that effort on his part can have any influence in turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and so in some slight degree preparing the way for the Coming of the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth; and yet he may realise that those are his instructions, and that wonders are said to be possible if action be taken in a spirit of faith. Consequently a steward of the mysteries of physical science may, without undue presumption, proceed to utter such thoughts as have been vouchsafed to him on topics which, however treated, are undoubtedly of the highest moment to mankind.

LERICI, *April* 1908.

Collect for Third Sunday in Advent

(Composed by Bishop Cosinin, 1661)

"O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee: Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*"

SECTION I—SCIENCE AND FAITH

Hugh Dobbs.
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March 30th 1909.

SCIENCE AND FAITH

CHAPTER I

THE OUTSTANDING CONTROVERSY

I

IT is widely recognised at the present day that the modern spirit of scientific inquiry has in the main exerted a wholesome influence upon Theology, clearing it of much encumbrance of doubtful doctrine, freeing it from slavery to the literal accuracy of historical records, and reducing the region of the miraculous or the incredible, with which it used to be almost conterminous, to a comparatively small area.

This influence is likely to continue as true science advances, but it by no means follows that the nature of the benefit will always be that of a clearing and unloading process. There must come a time when such a process has gone far enough, and when some positive contribution may be expected. Whether such a time has now arrived or not is clearly open to question, but I think it will be admitted that orthodox science at present, though it shows some sign of abstaining from virulent criticism of religious creeds, is still a long way from contributing in any degree to their support; nor are its followers ready to admit that they have as yet gone too far, if even far enough, in the negative direction. No doubt both sides would

allow that the highest Science and the truest Theology must ultimately be mutually consistent, and harmonious; but they are far from presenting that appearance at present. The term "Theology," as ordinarily used, necessarily signifies nothing ultimate or divine; it signifies only the present state of human knowledge on theological subjects. And similarly the term "Science," if correspondingly employed, represents no fetish to be worshipped blindly as absolute truth, but merely the present state of human knowledge on subjects within its grasp, together with the practical consequences deducible from such knowledge in the opinion of the average scientific man: it usually connotes what may be called orthodox science, —the orthodox science of the present day, as set forth by its professed exponents, and as indicated by the general atmosphere or setting in which figures in every branch of knowledge are now regarded by cultivated men.

It may be objected that there is no definite body of doctrine which can be classed as orthodox science; and it is true that there is no formulated creed; but I suggest that there is more nearly an orthodox science than there is an orthodox theology. Professors of theology differ among themselves in a rather conspicuous manner; and even in that branch of it with which alone most Englishmen are familiar, viz. Christian Theology, there are differences of opinion on apparently important issues, as is evidenced by the existence of Sects, ranging from Unitarians on the one side, to Greek and Roman Catholics on the other.

In science, sectarianism is less marked, controversies rage chiefly round matters of detail, and on all important issues its professors are agreed. This general consensus of opinion on the part of experts, a general consensus which the public are willing enough to acquiesce in, and adopt as far as they can understand it, is what I mean by the term "science as now understood," or, for brevity, "modern science."

Similarly, by "religious doctrine" we shall mean the general consensus of theologians so far as they are in agreement, especially perhaps the general consensus of Christian theologians; ignoring as far as possible the presumably minor points on which they differ, and eliminating everything manifestly below the moral level of dogma generally acceptable at the present day.

Now it must, I think, be admitted that the modern scientific atmosphere, in spite of much that is wholesome and nutritious, exercises a sort of blighting influence upon religious ardour. At any rate the great saints or seers have as a rule not been eminent for their acquaintance with exact scientific knowledge, but on the contrary, have felt a distrust and a dislike of that uncompromising quest for cold hard truth in which the leaders of science are engaged; while on the other hand, the leaders of science have shown an aloofness from, if not a hostility towards, the theoretical aspects of religion. In fact, it may be held that the general drift or atmosphere of modern science is adverse to the highest religious emotion, because unconvinced of the reality of many of the occurrences

upon which such an exalted state of feeling must be based, if it is to be anything more than a wave of transient enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, we must admit that among men of science, there must be many now living, who accept fully the facts and implications of science, who accept also the creeds of the Church, and who do not keep the two sets of ideas in watertight compartments of their minds, but do distinctly perceive a reconciling and fusing element.

If we proceed to ask what is this reconciling element, we find that it is neither science nor theology, but that it is either philosophy or poetry. By aid of philosophy, or by aid of poetry, a great deal can be accomplished. Mind and matter may be then no longer two, but one; this material universe may then become the living garment of God; gross matter may be regarded as a mere appearance, a mode of apprehending an idealistic cosmic reality, in which we really live and move and have our being; the whole of existence can become infused and suffused with immanent Deity.

No reconciliation would then be necessary between the spiritual and the material, between the laws of Nature and the will of God, because the two would be but aspects of one all-comprehensive pantheistic entity.

All this may possibly be in some sort true, but it is not science as now understood. It is no more science than are the creeds of the Churches. It is a guess, an intuition,—an inspiration perhaps,—but it is not

a link in a chain of assured and reasoned knowledge; it can no more be clearly formulated in words, or clearly apprehended in thought, than can any of the high and lofty conceptions of religion. It is, in fact, far more akin to religion than to science. It is no solution of the knotty entanglement, but a soaring above it; it is a reconciliation *in excelsis.*

Minds which can habitually rise to it are, *ipso facto,* essentially religious, and are exercising their religious functions; they have flown off the dull earth of exact knowledge into an atmosphere of faith.

But if this flight be possible, especially if it be ever possible to minds engaged in a daily round of scientific teaching and investigation, how can it be said that the atmosphere of modern science and the atmosphere of religious faith are incompatible? Wherein lies the incompatibility?

My reply briefly is—and this is the kernel of what I have to say—that orthodox modern science shows us a self-contained and self-sufficient universe, not in touch with anything beyond or above itself,—the general trend and outline of it known;—nothing supernatural or miraculous, no intervention of beings other than ourselves, being conceived possible.

While religion, on the other hand, requires us constantly and consciously to be in touch,—even affectionately in touch,—with a power, a mind, a being or beings, entirely out of our sphere, entirely beyond our scientific ken; the universe contemplated by religion is by no means self-contained or self-sufficient, it is dependent for its origin and maintenance,

as we are for our daily bread and future hopes, upon the power and the goodwill of a being or beings of which science has no knowledge. Science does not indeed always or consistently deny the existence of such transcendent beings, nor does it make any effectual attempt to limit their potential powers, but it definitely disbelieves in their exerting any actual influence on the progress of events, or in their producing or modifying the simplest physical phenomenon.

For instance, it is now considered unscientific to pray for rain, and Professor Tyndall went so far as to say:

"The principle [of the conservation of energy] teaches us that the Italian wind gliding over the crest of the Matterhorn is as firmly ruled as the earth in its orbital revolution round the sun; and that the fall of its vapour into clouds is exactly as much a matter of necessity as the return of the seasons. The dispersion, therefore, of the slightest mist by the special volition of the Eternal, would be as much a miracle as the rolling of the Rhone over the Grimsel precipices, down the valley of Hasli to Meyringen and Brientz. . . .

"Without the disturbance of a natural law, quite as serious as the stoppage of an eclipse, or the rolling of the river Niagara up the Falls no act of humiliation individual or national, could call one shower from heaven, or deflect towards us a single beam of the sun." [1]

[1] From *Fragments of Science*, "Prayer and Natural Law."

Certain objections may be made to this statement of Professor Tyndall's, even from the strictly scientific point of view: the law of the conservation of energy is needlessly dragged in when it has nothing really to do with it. We ourselves, for instance, though we have no power, nor hint of any power, to override the conservation of energy, are yet readily able, by a simple physical experiment, or by an engineering operation, to deflect a ray of light or to dissipate a mist, or divert a wind, or pump water uphill; and further objections may be made to the form of the statement notably to the word "therefore" as used to connect propositions entirely different in their terms. But the meaning is quite plain nevertheless. The assertion is that any act, however simple, if achieved by special volition of the Eternal, would be a miracle; and the implied dogma is that the special volition of the Eternal cannot, or at any rate does not, accomplish anything whatever in the physical world. And this dogma, although not really a deduction from any of the known principles of physical science, and possibly open to objection as a *petitio principii,* may nevertheless be taken as a somewhat exuberant statement of the generally accepted inductive teaching of orthodox science on the subject.

It ought, however, to be admitted at once by Natural Philosophers that the unscientific character of prayer for rain depends really not upon its conflict with any known physical law, since it need involve no greater interference with the order of nature than is implied in a request to a gardener to water the gar-

den—it does not really depend upon the impossibility of causing rain to fall when otherwise it might not—but upon the disbelief of science in any power who can and will attend and act. To prove this, let us bethink ourselves that it is not an inconceivable possibility that at some future date mankind may acquire some control over the weather, and be able to influence it; not merely in an indirect manner, as at present they can affect climate, by felling forests or flooding deserts, but in some more direct fashion; in that case prayers for rain would begin again, only the petitions would be addressed, not to heaven, but to the Meteorological Office. We do not at present ask the secretary of that government department to improve our seasons, simply because we do not think that he knows how; if we thought he did, we should not be debarred from approaching him by a suspicion of his possible non-existence, or a fear that our request would not be delivered. Professor Tyndall's dogma will, if pressed, be found to necessitate one of these last alternatives; although superficially it pretends to make the somewhat grotesque suggestion that the alteration requested is so complicated and involved, that really, with the best intentions in the world, the Deity does not know how to do it.

An attitude of pious resignation might be taken, that the central Office knew best what it was about, and that petitions were only worrying; but that would be rather a supine and fatalistic attitude if we were in real distress, and certainly, on a higher level, it would be a very unfilial one. Religious people have been

told, on what they generally take to be good authority, that prayer might be a miraculously powerful engine for achievement, even in the physical world, if they would only believe with sufficient vigour; but (I am not here questioning the soundness of their position) they have dramatised or spiritualised away the statement, and act upon it no more. Influenced it is to be presumed by science, they have come definitely to disbelieve in physical interference of any kind whatever on the part of another order of beings, whether more exalted or more depraved than ourselves, although such beings are frequently mentioned in their sacred books.

Whatever they might be able to do if they chose, for all practical purposes such beings are to the average scientific man purely imaginary, and he feels sure that we can never have experiential knowledge of them or their powers. In his view the universe lies before us for investigation, and, so far as he can see, it is complete without them; it is subject to our own partial control if we are willing patiently to learn how to exercise it, but of any other control, we would say, there is no perceptible trace. Even in the most vital concerns of life, it is the doctor, not the priest, who is summoned: a pestilence is no longer attributed to Divine jealousy, nor would the threshing-floor of Araunah be used to stay it.

The two subjects, moreover, adopt very different modes of expression. The death of an archbishop can be stated scientifically in terms not very different from those appropriate to the stoppage of a clock, or

the extinction of a fire; but the religious formula for the same event is that it has pleased God in His infinite wisdom to take to Himself the soul of our dear brother, etc. The very words of such a statement are to modern science unmeaning. (In saying this, I trust to be understood as not now in the slightest degree attempting to prejudge the question, which form is the more appropriate.)

Religion may, in fact, be called supernatural or superscientific, if the term "natural" be limited to that region of which we now believe that we have any direct scientific knowledge.

In disposition also Religion and Science are opposite. Science cultivates a vigorous adult, intelligent, serpent-like wisdom, and active interference with the course of nature; religion fosters a meek, receptive, child-hearted attitude of dovelike resignation to the Divine will.

Take a scientific man who is a man of science, pure and simple with no element either of a poet, or a philosopher, or a saint, and place him in the atmosphere habitual to the churches,—and he must starve. He requires solid food, but his sole provision is air. He requires something to touch and define and know; but all his surroundings are ethereal, indefinable, illimitable, incomprehensible, beautiful, and vague. He dies of inanition.

Take, again, a narrow religious man—one in whom religion is the sole aptitude—into the cold dry workings, the gropings and tunnellings of science, where everything must be scrutinised and proved, distinctly

conceived and precisely formulated,—and he cannot breathe. He requires ample air and space; whereas he finds himself underground, among foundations and masonry, very solid and substantial, but completely cabined and confined. He dies of asphyxia.

If a man be able to live in both regions, to be amphibious as it were,—able to take short flights occasionally, and able to burrow underground occasionally, accepting the solid work of science and believing its truth, realising the aerial structures of religion, and perceiving their beauty,—will such a man be as happily and powerfully at home in the air as if he had no earth adhering to his wings? Is the modern man as happily and as powerfully religious as he might have been with less information about the universe? Or, I would add parenthetically, as he will yet assuredly become, with more?

II

Leaving general considerations, and coming to details, let us look at a few of the simpler religious doctrines, such as are still, I suppose, popularly held in this country.

The creed of the ancient Israelites was well, or at least strikingly, summarised by Mr. Huxley in one of his *Nineteenth Century* articles (March 1886). He there says: "The chief articles of the theological creed of the old Israelites, which are made known to us by the direct evidence of the ancient records, . . . are as remarkable for that which they contain as for that which is absent from them. They reveal a firm

conviction that, when death takes place, a something termed a soul, or spirit, leaves the body and continues to exist in Sheol for a period of indefinite duration, even though there is no proof of any belief in absolute immortality; that such spirits can return to earth to possess and inspire the living; that they are in appearance and in disposition likenesses of the men to whom they belonged, but that, as spirits, they have larger powers and are freer from physical limitations; that they thus form one of a number of kinds of spiritual existence known as Elohim, of whom Jahveh, the national God of Israel, is one; that, consistently with this view, Jahveh was conceived as a sort of spirit, human in aspect and in sense, and with many human passions, but with immensely greater intelligence and power than any other Elohim, whether human or divine."

The mere calm statement of such a creed was plainly held by Mr. Huxley to be a sufficient refutation.

But we need not limit ourselves to the Old Testament, some of whose alleged facts may admittedly be abandoned without detriment, as belonging to the legendary or the obscure; we may be constrained by science to go further, and to maintain that even what some regard as fundamental Christian tenets, such as the Incarnation or non-natural birth, and the Resurrection or non-natural disappearance of the body from the tomb, have, from the scientific point of view, no reasonable likelihood or probability whatever. It may be, and often has been, asserted that they appear as

childish fancies, appropriate to the infancy of civilisation and a prescientific credulous age; readily intelligible to the historian and student of folk-lore, but not otherwise interesting. The same has been said of every variety of alleged miraculous occurrence, and not merely of such dogmas as the fall of man from an original state of perfection, of the subsequent extirpation of the human race down to a single family, and so on.

The whole historical record, wherever it exceeds the commonplace, every act attributed directly to the Deity, whether it be sending fire from heaven, or writing upon stone, or leadings by cloud and fire, or conversations, whether during trance or otherwise, is incompatible with the teachings of modern science (let it be clearly remembered how I have defined the phrase "modern science" above); and when considered prosaically, much of the record is summarily discredited, even by many theologians now. Nor is this acquiescence in negation confined to the leaders. The general religious world has agreed apparently to throw overboard Jonah and the whale, Joshua and the sun, the three Children and the fiery furnace; it does not seem to take anything in the book of Judges or the book of Daniel very seriously; and though it still clings pathetically to the book of Genesis, it is willing to relegate to poetry, *i.e.* to imagination or fiction, such legends as the creation of the world, Adam and his rib, Eve and the apple, Noah and his ark, language and the tower of Babel, Elijah and the chariot of fire, and many others. The

stock reconciling phrase, applied to the legend of the six-days' creation, or the Levitican mistakes in Natural History, after the strained "day-period" mode of interpretation had been exploded in "Essays and Reviews," used to be, that the Bible was never meant to teach science; wherefore, whenever it touches upon any branch of natural knowledge, its statements are to be interpreted in a friendly spirit, *i.e.* it is to be glossed over, and in fact disbelieved. But a book which deals with so prodigious a subject as the origin of all things, and the history of the human race, cannot avoid a treatment of natural facts which is really a teaching of science, whether such teaching is *meant* or not; and indeed the whole idea involved in the word "meant" is repugnant to the conceptions of biological science, which claims to have ousted teleology from its arena.

Moreover, if religious people go as far as this, where are they to stop? What, then, do they propose to do with the turning of water into wine, the ejection of devils, the cursing of the fig-tree, the feeding of five thousand, the raising of Lazarus? Or, to go deeper still, what do they make of the scene at the Baptism, of the Transfiguration, of the Crucifixion, the appearances after Death, the Ascension into heaven? On all these points I venture to suggest that neither religion nor science has said its last word.

But it may be urged that even these are but details compared with the one transcendent doctrine of the existence of an omnipotent and omniscient benevo-

lent personal God; the fundamental tenet of nearly all religions. But so far as science has anything to say on this subject, and it has not very much, its tendency is to throw mistrust, not upon the existence of Deity itself, but upon any adjectives applied to the Deity. "Infinite" and "eternal" may pass, and "omnipotent" and "omniscient" may reluctantly be permitted to enter with them,—these expansive epithets relieve the mind, without expressing more than is implicitly contained in the substantive God. But concerning "personal" and "benevolent" and other anthropomorphic adjectives, science is exceedingly dubious; nor is omnipotence itself very easily reconcilable with the actual condition of things as we now experience them. The present state of the world is very far short of perfection. Why are things still imperfect if controlled by a benevolent omnipotence? Why, indeed, does evil or pain at all exist? All very ancient puzzles these, but still alive; and the solution to them so far attempted by science lies in the word Evolution, a word whose applicability to the work of a perfect God may readily be the subject of controversy.

Taught by science, we learn that there has been no fall of man, there has been a rise. Through an apelike ancestry, back through a tadpole and fishlike ancestry, away to the early beginnings of life, the origin of man is being traced by science. There was no specific creation of the world such as was conceived appropriate to a geocentric conception of the universe; the world is a condensation of primeval gas,

a congeries of stones and meteors fallen together; still falling together, indeed, in a larger neighboring mass (the Sun). By the energy of that still persistent falling together, the ether near us is kept constantly agitated, and to the energy of this ethereal agitation all the manifold activity of our planet is due. The whole system has evolved itself from mere moving matter in accordance with the law of gravitation, and there is no certain sign of either beginning or end. Solar systems can by collision or otherwise resolve themselves into nebulæ, and nebulæ left to themselves can condense into solar systems,—everywhere in the spaces around us we see a part of the process going on; the formation of solar systems from whirling nebulæ lies before our eyes, if not in the visible sky itself, yet in the magnified photographs taken of that sky. Even though the whole process of evolution is not completely understood as yet, does anyone doubt that it will become more thoroughly understood in time? and if they do doubt it, would they hope effectively to bolster up religion by such a doubt?

It is difficult to resist yielding to the bent and trend of "modern science," as well as to its proved conclusions. Its bent and trend may have been wrongly estimated by its present disciples: a large tract of knowledge may have been omitted from its ken, which when included will revolutionise some of their accepted opinions; but, however this may be, there can be no doubt about the tendency of orthodox science at the present time. It suggests to us that

the Cosmos is self-explanatory, self-contained, and self-maintaining. From everlasting to everlasting the material universe rolls on, composing worlds and disintegrating them, producing vegetable beauty and destroying it, evolving intelligent animal life, developing that into a self-conscious human race, and then plunging it once more into annihilation.

> "Thou makest thine appeal to me!
> I bring to life, I bring to death,
> The spirit does but mean the breath,
> I know no more. . . ."

But at this point the theologian happily and eagerly interposes, with a crucial inquiry of science about this same bringing to life. Granted that the blaze of the sun accounts for winds and waves, and hail, and rain, and rivers, and all the myriad activities of the earth, does it account for life? Has it accounted for the life of the lowest animal, the tiniest plant, the simplest cell, hardly visible but yet self-moving, in the field of a microscope?

And science, in chagrin, has to confess that hitherto in this direction it has failed. It has not yet witnessed the origin of the smallest trace of life from dead matter: all life, so far as has been watched, proceeds from antecedent life. Given the life of a single cell, science would esteem itself competent ultimately to trace its evolution into all the myriad existences of plant and animal and man; but the origin of protoplasmic activity itself as yet eludes it. But will the Theologian triumph in the admission? will he therein detect at last the dam which shall stem the torrent of

scepticism? will he base an argument for the direct action of the Deity in mundane affairs on that failure, and entrench himself behind that present incompetence of labouring men? If so, he takes his stand on what may prove a yielding foundation. The present powerlessness of science to explain or originate life is a convenient weapon wherewith to fell a pseudo-scientific antagonist who is dogmatising too loudly out of bounds; but it is not perfectly secure as a permanent support. In an early stage of civilisation it may have been supposed that flame only proceeded from antecedent flame, but the tinder-box and the lucifer-match were invented nevertheless. Theologians have probably learnt by this time that their central tenets should not be founded, even partially, upon nescience, or upon negations of any kind, lest the placid progress of positive knowledge should once more undermine their position, and another discovery have to be scouted with alarmed and violent anathemas.

Any year, or any century, the physical aspect of the nature of life may become more intelligible, and may perhaps resolve itself into an action of already known forces on the very complex molecule of protoplasm. Already in Germany have inorganic and artificial substances been found to crawl about on glass slides under the action of surface-tension or capillarity, with an appearance which is said to have deceived even a biologist into hastily pronouncing them living amœbæ. Life in its ultimate element and on its material side is such a simple thing, it is but a

slight extension of known chemical and physical forces; the cell must be able to respond to stimuli, to assimilate outside materials, and to subdivide. I apprehend that there is not a biologist but believes (perhaps quite erroneously) that sooner or later the discovery will be made, and that a cell having all the essential functions of life will be constructed out of inorganic material. Seventy years ago organic chemistry was the chemistry of vital products, of compounds that could not be made artificially by man. Now there is no such chemistry; the name persists, but its meaning has changed.

It may be conceivably argued that after all *we* are alive, and that if we ever learn how to make animals or plants, they as our creation will originate from pre-existent life; just as when we make new species by artificial selection we exercise a control over the forces of nature which may have some remote likeness to Divine control. And this may possibly be a theme capable of enlargement.

But meanwhile what do we mean by such a phrase as "Divine control"? for, after all, the controversy between religion and science is not so much a controversy as to the being or not being of a God. Science might be willing to concede His existence as a vague and ineffective hypothesis, but there would still remain a question as to His mode of action, a controversy as to the method of the Divine government of the world.

And this is the standing controversy, by no means really dead at the present day. Is the world con-

trolled by a living Person, accessible to prayer, influenced by love, able and willing to foresee, to intervene, to guide and wistfully to lead without compulsion spirits in some sort akin to Himself?

Or is the world a self-generated, self-controlling machine, complete and fully organised for movement, either up or down, for progress or degeneration, according to the chances of heredity and the influence of environment? Has the world, as it were, *secreted* or arrived at life and mind and consciousness by the play of natural forces acting on the complexities of highly developed molecular aggregates; at first, life-cells, ultimately brain-cells; and these are not the organ or instrument, but the very reality and essence of life and of mind?

If there be any other orders of conscious existence in the universe, as probably there are, are they also locked up on their several planets, without the power of communicating or helping or informing, and all working out their own destiny in permanent isolation? Everything in such a world would be not only apparently but really a definite sequence of cause and effect, just as it seems to us here; and prayer, to be effectual in such a world must be not what theologians mean by prayer, but must be either simple meditation for acquiescence in the inevitable, or else a petition addressed to some other of the dwellers in our time and place, that they may be induced by benevolent acts to ease some of the burdens to which their petitioners are liable.

We thus return to our original thesis, that the root question or outstanding controversy between science and faith rests upon two distinct conceptions of the universe:—the one, that of a self-contained and self-sufficient universe, with no outlook into or links with anything beyond, uninfluenced by any life or mind except such as is connected with a visible and tangible material body; and the other conception, that of a universe lying open to all manner of spiritual influences, permeated through and through with a Divine spirit, guided and watched by living minds, acting through the medium of law indeed, but with intelligence and love behind the law: a universe by no means self-sufficient or self-contained, but with sensitive tendrils groping into another supersensuous order of existence, where reign laws hitherto unimagined by science, but laws as real and as mighty as those by which the material universe is governed.

According to the one conception, faith is childish and prayer absurd; the only individual immortality lies in the memory of descendants; benevolence and cheerful acquiescence in fate are the highest religious attributes possible; and the future of the human race is determined by the law of gravitation and the circumstances of space.

According to the other conception, prayer may be mighty to the removal of mountains, and by faith we may feel ourselves citizens of an eternal and glorious cosmogony of mutual help and co-operation, advancing from lowly stages to ever higher states of happy

activity, world without end, and may catch in anticipation some glimpses of that "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

The whole controversy hinges, in one sense, on a practical pivot—the efficacy of prayer. Is prayer to hypothetical and supersensuous beings as senseless and useless as it is unscientific, or does prayer pierce through the husk and apparent covering of the sensuous universe, and reach something living, loving, and helpful beyond?

And in another sense the controversy turns upon a question of fact. Do we live in a universe permeated with life and mind: life and mind independent of matter and unlimited in individual duration? Or is life limited, in space to the surface of planetary masses of matter, and in time to the duration of the material envelope essential to its manifestation?

The answer is given in one way by orthodox modern science, and in another way by Religion of all times; and until these opposite answers are made consistent, the reconciliation between Science and Faith is incomplete.

CHAPTER II

THE RECONCILIATION

I

IT may or may not have been observed, by anyone who has read the previous chapter,—but in so far as it has been missed, the whole meaning has been misconceived,—that when speaking of the atmosphere or the conclusions, the doctrines or the tendency, of "science," I was careful always to explain that I meant orthodox or present-day science; meaning not the comprehensive grasp of a Newton, but science as now interpreted by its recognised official exponents, —by the average Fellow of the Royal Society for instance. Just as by "faith" I intended not the ecstatic insight aroused in a seer by some momentary revelation, but the ordinary workaday belief of the average enlightened theologian. And my thesis was that the attitudes of mind appropriate to these two classes, were at present fundamentally diverse; that there was still an outstanding controversy, or ground for controversy, between science and faith, although active fighting has been suspended, and although all bitterness has passed from the conflict, let us hope never to return. But the diversity remains, and for

the present it is better so, if it has not achieved its work. Eliminating the bitterness, the conflict has been useful, and it would be far from well even to attempt to bring it to a close prematurely. But yet there must be an end to it some time; reconciliation is bound to lie somewhere in the future; no two parts or aspects of the Universe can permanently and really be discordant. The only question is where the meeting-place may be; whether it is nearest to the orthodox faith or to the orthodox science of the present day. This question is the subject of the present chapter, which is a sequel to the preceding. Let me, greatly daring, presume to enter upon the inquiry into what is really true and essential in the opposing creeds, how much of each has its origin in over-hasty assumption or fancy, and how far the opposing views are merely a natural consequence of imperfect vision of opposite sides of the same veil.

First among the truths that will have to be accepted by both sides, we may take the reign of Law, sometimes called the Uniformity of Nature. The discovery of uniformity must be regarded as mainly the work of Science: it did not come by revelation. In moments of inspiration it was glimpsed,—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,"—but the glimpse was only momentary, the Hebrew "atmosphere" was saturated with the mists of cataclysm, visible judgments, and conspicuous interferences. We used to be told that the Creator's methods were adapted to the stage of His Creatures, and varied from age to age: that it was really His actions, and not their mode of

regarding them, that varied. The doctrine of uniformity first took root and grew in scientific soil.

At first sight this doctrine of uniformity excludes Divine control; and the law of evolution proceeds still further in the direction of excluding everything; in the nature of personal will, of intention, of guidance, of adaptation, of management. It shows that things change and how they change, and it attempts to show why they change. The Darwinian form of it attempts to account for the origin of species by inevitable necessity, free from artificial selection or operations analogous to those of the breeder. The old Theology has gone, and guidance and purpose appear to have gone with it.

At first sight, but at first sight only. So might an observer, inspecting some great and perfect factory, with machines constantly weaving patterns, some beautiful, some ugly, conclude, or permit himself to dream at least, after some hours' watching, during which everything proceeded without a hitch, driven as it were by inexorable fate, that everything went off itself, controlled by cold dreary necessity. And if his scrutiny could be continued for weeks or years, and it still presented the same aspect, his dream would begin to seem to be true: the perfection of mechanism would weary the spectator: his human weakness would long for something to go wrong, so that someone from an upper office might step down and set it right again. Humanity is accustomed to such interventions and breaks in a ceaseless sequence, and, when no such breaks and interventions occur,

may conclude hastily that the scheme is self-originating, self-sustained, that it works to no ultimate and foreseen destiny.

So sometimes, looking at the east end of London, or many another only smaller city, has the feeling of despair seized men: they wonder what it can all mean. So, on the other hand, looking at the loom of nature, has the feeling, not of despair, but of what has been called atheism, one ingredient of atheism, arisen: atheism never fully realised, and wrongly so-called; recently it has been called severe Theism indeed; for it is joyful sometimes, interested and placid always, exultant at the strange splendour of the spectacle which its intellect has laid bare to contemplation, satisfied with the perfection of the mechanism, content to be a part of the self-generated organism, and endeavouring to think that the feelings of duty, of earnest effort, and of faithful service, which conspicuously persist in spite of all discouragement, are on this view intelligible as well as instinctive, and sure that nothing less than unrepining, unfaltering, unswerving acquiescence is worthy of our dignity as man.

The law of evolution not only studies change and progress, it seeks to trace sequences back to antecedents: it strains after the origin of all things. But ultimate origins are inscrutable. Let us admit, as scientific men, that of real origin, even of the simplest thing, we know nothing; not even of a pebble. Sand is the debris of rocks, and fresh rocks can be formed of compacted sand; but this suggests infinity, not origin. Infinity is non-human and we shrink

from it, yet what else can there be in space? And if in space, why not in time also? Much might be said here, but let it pass. We must admit that science knows nothing of ultimate origins. Which first, the hen or the egg? is a trivial form of a very real puzzle. That the world, in the sense of this planet, this homely lump of matter we call the earth —that this had an origin, a history, a past, intelligible more or less, growingly intelligible to the eye of science, is true enough. The date when it was molten may be roughly estimated; the manner and mechanism of the birth of the moon has been guessed: the earth and moon then *originated* in one sense; before that they were part of a nebula, like the rest of the solar system; and some day the solar system may again be part of a nebula, by reason of collision with some at present tremendously distant mass. But all that is nothing to the Universe; nothing even to the visible universe. The collisions there take place every now and again before our eyes. The Universe is full of lumps of matter of every imaginable size: the history of a solar system may be written—its birth and also its death, separated perhaps by millions of millions of years; but what of that? It is but an episode, a moment in the eternal cosmogony, and the eye of history looks to what happened before the birth and after the death of any particular aggregate; just as a child may trace the origin and the destruction of a soap bubble, the form of which is evanescent, the material of which is permanent.

While the soap bubble lived it was the scene of

much beauty and of a kind of law and order impossible to the mere water and soap out of which it was made, and into which again it has collapsed. The history of the soap bubble can be written, but there is a before and an after. So it is with the solar system; so with any assigned collocation of matter in the universe. No point in space can be thought of "at which if a man stand it shall be impossible for him to cast a javelin into the beyond;" nor can any epoch be conceived in time at which the mind will not instantly and automatically inquire, "and what before," or "what after?"

Yet does the human mind pine for something finite: it longs for a beginning, even if it could dispense with an end. It has tried of late to imagine that the law of dissipation of energy was a heaven-sent message of the finite duration of the Universe, so that before everything was, it could seek a Great First Cause; and after everything had been, could take refuge once more in Him.

Seen more closely, these are childish notions. They would give no real help if they were true; any more than other fairy tales suitable for children.

In the dawn of civilisation God "walked in the garden in the cool of the day." Down to say the middle of the nineteenth century He brought things into existence by a creative *Fiat,* and looked on His work for a time with approbation; only to step down and destroy a good deal of it before many years had elapsed, and then to patch it up and try to mend it from time to time.

All very human: the endless rumble of the machinery is distressing, perfection is intolerable. Still more intolerable is imperfection not attended to; the machinery groans, lacks oil, shows signs of wear, some of the fabrics it is weaving are hideous; why, why, does no one care? Surely the manager will before long step down and put one of the looms to rights, or scold a workman, or tell us what it is all for, and why he needs the woven fabric, *der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.*

We see that he does not now interfere, not even when things go very wrong; the "hands" are left to put things right as best they can, nothing mysterious ever happens now, it is all commonplace and semi-intelligible; we ourselves could easily throw a machine out of gear; we do, sometimes; we ourselves if we are clever enough and patient enough, could even perform the far harder task of putting one to right again; we could even suggest fresh patterns; we seem to be more than onlookers—as musicians and artists we can create—perhaps we are foremen; and if ideas occur to us, why should we not throw them into the common stock? There is no head manager at all, this thing has been always running; as the hands die off, others take their places; they have not been selected or appointed to the job; they are only here as the fittest of a large number of whom they alone survive; even the looms seem to have a self-mending, self-regenerative power; and we ourselves, we are not looking at it or assisting in it for long. When we go, other brilliantly endowed and inventive

spectators or helpers will take our places. We understand the whole arrangement now; it it simpler than at first we thought.

Is it, then, so simple? Does the uniformity and the eternity and the self-sustainedness of it make it the easier to understand? Are we so sure that the guidance and control are not really continuous, instead of being, as we expected, intermittent? May we be not looking at the working of the Manager all the time, and at nothing else? Why should He step down and interfere with Himself?

That is the lesson science has to teach theology—to look for the action of the Deity, if at all, then always; not in the past alone, nor only in the future, but equally in the present. If His action is not visible now, it never will be, and never has been visible.

Shall we look for it in toy eruptions in the West Indies? As well look for it in the fall of a child's box of bricks! Shall we hope to see the Deity some day step out of Himself and display His might or His love or some other attribute? We can see Him now if we look; if we cannot see, it is only that our eyes are shut.

"Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands or feet:"—

poetry, yes—but also science; the real trend and meaning of Science, whether of orthodox "science" or not.

II

There is nothing new in Pantheism:—indeed no! But there are different kinds of pantheism. That

the All is a manifestation, a revelation of God,—that it is in a manner, a dim and ungraspable manner, in some sort God Himself,—may be readily granted; but what does the All include? It were a strange kind of All that included mountains and trees, the forces of nature, and the visible material universe only, and excluded the intelligence, the will, the emotions, the individuality or personality, of which we ourselves are immediately conscious. Shall we possess these things and God not possess them? That would be no pantheism at all. Any power, any love, of which we ourselves are conscious does thereby certainly exist; and so it must exist in highly intensified and nobler form in the totality of things,—unless we make the grotesque assumption that in all the infinite universe we denizens of planet Earth are the highest. Let no worthy human attribute be denied to the Deity. In Anthropomorphism there are many errors, but there is one truth. Whatever worthy attribute belongs to man, be it personality or any other, its existence in the Universe is thereby admitted; it belongs to the All.

The only conceivable way of denying personality, and effort, and failure, and renewed effort, and consciousness, and love, and hate too, for that matter, in the real *whole* of things, is to regard them as illusory,—physiological and purely material illusions in ourselves. Even so, they are in some sense *there;* they are not unreal, however they are to be accounted for. We must blink nothing; evolution is a truth, a strange and puzzling truth; "the whole creation

groaneth and travaileth together;" and the most perfect of all the sons of men, the likest God this planet ever saw, He to whom many look for their idea of what God is, surely He taught us that suffering, and sacrifice, and wistful yearning for something not yet attainable, were not to be regarded as human attributes alone.

Must we not admit the evil attributes also? In the Whole, yes; but one of our experiences is that there are grades of existence. We recognise that in ourselves the ape and tiger are dying out, that the germs of higher faculties have made their appearance; it is an intensification of the higher that we may infer in the more advanced grades of existence; intensification of the lower lies behind and beneath us.

The inference or deduction of some of the attributes of Deity, from that which we can recognise as "the likest God within the soul," is a legitimate deduction, if properly carried out; and it is in close correspondence with the methods of physical science. It has been said that from the properties of a drop of water the possibility of a Niagara or an Atlantic might be inferred by a man who had seen or heard of neither.[1] And it is true that by experiment on a small quantity of water a man with the brain of Newton and the mathematical power and knowledge of Lord Rayleigh could deduce by pure reasoning most if not all of the inorganic phenomena of an ocean; and that not vaguely but definitely; the existence of waves on its surface, the rate at which they would travel as

[1] Sir Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet.*

dependent upon distance from crest to crest, their maximum height, their length as depending on depth of sea; the existence of ripples also, going at a different pace and following a different law; the breaking of waves upon a shore; the tides also; the ocean currents caused by inequalities of temperature, and many other properties which are realised in an actual ocean:—not as topographical realities indeed, but as necessary theoretical consequences of the hypothetical existence of so great a mass of water. Reasoning from the small to the great is legitimate reasoning, notwithstanding that by increase of size phenomena wholly different and at first sight unexpected come into being. No one not a mathematician looking at a drop of water could infer the Atlantic billows or the tides; but they are all there in embryo, given gravitation; and yet not there in actuality in even the smallest degree. People sometimes think that increase of size is mere magnification, and introduces no new property. They are mistaken. Waves *could* not be on a drop, nor tides either, nor waterspouts, nor storms. The simple fact that the earth is *large* makes it retain an atmosphere; and the existence of an atmosphere enhances the importance of a globe beyond all comparison, and renders possible plant and animal life. The simple fact that the sun is *very* large makes it hot, *i.e.* enables it to generate heat, and so fits it to be the centre and source of energy to worlds of habitable activity.

To suppose that the deduction of divine attributes by intensification of our own attributes must neces-

sarily result in a "magnified non-natural man" is to forget these facts of physical science. If the reasoning is bad, or the data insufficient, the result is worthless, but the method is legitimate, though far from easy; and it is hardly to be expected that the science of theology can yet have had its Newton, or even its Copernicus.[1] At present it is safest to walk by faith and inspiration; and it is the saint and prophet rather than the theologian whom humanity would prefer to trust.

III

Now let us go back to our groping inquiry—to the series of questions left unanswered in the latter portion of Chapter I—and ask, what then of prayer, regarded scientifically; of miracle, if we like to call it miracle; of the region not only of emotion and intelligence, but of active work, guidance, and interference? Are these, after all, so rigorously excluded by the reign of law? Are not these also parts of its kingdom? Shall law apply only to the inorganic and the non-living? Shall it not rule the domain of life

[1] Theologians may differ from this estimate; and if so, I defer to their opinion. It is well known that the topics slightly glanced at in the first half of this section have been profoundly studied by them; but the subject is so difficult that an outsider can hardly assume that as much progress has been made in Theology as in the physical sciences. Not so much progress has been made even in the biological sciences as in the more specifically physical. It is sometimes said that biology has had its Newton, but it is not so: Darwin was its Copernicus, and revolutionised ideas as the era of Copernicus did. Newton did not revolutionise ideas: his was a synthetic and deductive era.

and of mind too? Speaking or thinking of the Universe, we must exclude no part;

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul;"

"For as the reasonable soul and human flesh is one man"—

so God and man constitute a unity,—a unity characterized by moral freedom in accordance with law.

Let us take this question of *guidance*. We must see it in action now or never. Do we see it now? Orthodox theology vaguely assumes it; orthodox science sees it not at all. What is the truth? Is the blindness of science subjective or objective? Is the vision absent because there is nothing to see or because we have shut our eyes, and have declined to contemplate a region of dim and misty fact?

Take the origin of species by the persistence of favourable variations, how is the appearance of those same favourable variations accounted for? Except by artificial selection, not at all. Given their appearance, their development by struggle and inheritance and survival can be explained; but that they arose spontaneously, by random change without purpose, is an assertion which cannot be made. Does anyone think that the skill of the beaver, the instinct of the bee, the genius of a man, arose by chance, and that its presence is accounted for by handing down and by survival? What struggle for existence will explain the advent of Beethoven? What pitiful necessity for earning a living as a dramatist will educe for us

Shakespeare? These things are beyond science of the orthodox type; then let it be silent and deny nothing in the Universe till it has at least made an honest effort to comprehend the whole.

Genius, however, science *has* made an effort not wholly to ignore; but take other human faculties—Premonition, Inspiration, Prevision, Telepathy—what is the meaning of these things? Orthodox science refuses to contemplate them, orthodox theology also looks at some of them askance. Many philosophers have relegated them to the region of the unconscious, or the subconscious, where dwell things of nothing worth. A few Psychologists are beginning to attend.

Men of religion can hold aloof or not as they please: probably they had better hold aloof until the scientific basis of these things has been rendered more secure. At present they are beyond the pale of science, but they are some of them inside the Universe of fact,—all of them, as I now begin to believe,—and their meaning must be extracted. So long as this region is ignored, dogmatic science should be silent. It has a right to its own adopted region, it has no right to be heard outside. It cannot see guidance, it cannot recognise the meaning of the whole trend of things, the constant leadings, the control, the help, the revelations, the beckonings, beyond our normal bodily and mental powers. No, for it will not look. What becomes of an intelligence which has left this earth? Whence comes the nascent intelligence which arrives? What is the meaning of our human personality and individuality? Did we spring into existence a few

years ago? Do we cease to exist a few years hence? It does not know. It does not want to know.

Does theology seek enlightenment any more energetically? No, it is satisfied with its present information, which some people mistake for divine knowledge on these subjects. Divine knowledge is perhaps not obtained so easily.

At present, in the cosmic scheme we strangely draw the line at man. We know of every grade of animal life from the amœba upwards, with some slight hiatus here and there,—the lowest being single cells indistinguishable from plants,—but the series terminates with man. From man the scale of existence is supposed to step to God. Is it not somewhat sudden? The total descent from man to the amœba is an incomparably smaller interval. Yet that is a deep declivity; profound, but not infinite. Why this sudden jump from the altitude of man into infinity? Are there no intermediate states of existence?

Perhaps on other planets,—yes, bodily existence on other planets is probable, not necessarily on any planet of our solar system, but that is a trifle in the visible universe; it is as our little five-roomed house among all the dwellings of mankind. But why on other planets only? Why bodily existence only? Why think solely of those incarnate personalities from whom, by exigencies of place, we are most isolated? Because we feel more akin to such, and we know of no others. A good answer so far, and a true. But do we wish to learn? Have we our minds open? A few men of science have adduced

evidence of intelligence not wholly inaccessible and yet not familiarly accessible, intelligence perhaps a part of ourselves, perhaps a part of others, intelligence which seems closely connected with the region of genius, of telepathy, of clairvoyance, to which I have briefly referred.

Suppose for a moment that there were a God. Science has never really attempted to deny His existence. Conceive a scientific God. How would He work? Surely not by speech or by intermittent personal interference. He would be in, and among, and of, the whole scheme of things. The universe is governed by law; effect is connected with cause; [1] if a thing moves it is because something moves it, [2] effects are due and only due to agents. If there be guidance or control, it must be by agents that it is exerted. Then what in the scheme of things would be His agents?

Surely among such agents we must recognise ourselves: we can at least consider how we and other animals work. Watch the bird teaching its young to fly, the mother teaching a child to read, the statesman nursing the destiny of a new-born nation. Is there no guidance there?

What is the meaning of legislation and municipal government, and acts of reform, and all the struggle after better lives for ourselves and others?

Pure automatism, say some; an illusion of free will. Possibly; but even a dream is not an absolute nonen-

[1] If this involves controversy, then sequent with antecedent.

[2] This I wish to maintain in spite of controversy.

tity; the effort, however it be expressed or accounted for, exists.

What is all the effort—regarded scientifically—but the action of the totality of things trying to improve itself, striving still to evolve something higher, holier, and happier, out of an inchoate mass? There may be many other ways of regarding it, but this is one. Failures, mistakes, sins,—yes, they exist; evolution would be meaningless if perfection were already attained; but surely even now we see some progress. surely the effort of our saints is bearing fruit. This planet has labored long and patiently for the advent of a human race, for millions of years it was the abode of strange beasts, and now recently it has become the abode of man. What but imperfection would you expect? May it not be suggested that conscious evil or vice looms rather large in our eyes, oppresses us with a somewhat exaggerated sense of its cosmic importance, because it is peculiarly characteristic of the *human* stage of development: the lower animals know little or nothing of it; they may indeed do things which in men would be sinful, but that is just what sin is—reversion to a lower type after perception of a higher. The consciousness of crime, the active pursuit of degradation, does not arise till something like human intelligence is reached; and only a little higher up it ceases again. It appears to be a stage rather rapidly passed through in the cosmic scheme. Greed, for instance, greed in the widest sense, accumulation for accumulation's sake: it is a human defect, and one responsible for much misery to-day;

but it arose recently, and already it is felt to be below the standard of the race. A stage very little above present humanity, not at all above the higher grades of present humanity, and we shall be free from it again.

Let us be thankful we have got thus far, and struggle on a little farther. It is our destiny, and whether here or elsewhere it will be accomplished.

We are God's agents, visible and tangible agents, and we can help; we ourselves can answer some kinds of prayer, so it be articulate; we ourselves can interfere with the course of inanimate nature, can make waste places habitable and habitable places waste. Not by breaking laws do we ever influence nature—we cannot break a law of nature, it is not brittle, we only break ourselves if we try—but by obeying them. In acordance with law we have to act, but act we can and do, and through us acts the Deity.

And perhaps not alone through us. We are the highest bodily organisms on this material planet, and the material control of it belongs to us. It is subject to the laws of Physics and to the laws of our minds operating through our bodies. If there are other beings near us they do not trespass. It is our sphere, so far as Physics are concerned. Of any exceptions to this statement, stringent proof must be forthcoming.

Assertions are made that under certain strange conditions *physical* interference does occur; but there is always a person of unusual type present when these things happen, and until we know more of the

power of the unconscious human personality, it is simplest to assume that these physical acts are due, whether consciously, or unconsciously, to that person.

But what about our mental acts? We can operate on each other's minds through our physical envelope, by speech and writing and in other ways, but we can do more: it appears that we can operate at a distance, by no apparent physical organ or medium; if by mechanism at all, then by mechanism at present unknown to us.

Supposing, then, that we are open to influence from each other by non-corporeal methods, may we not be open also to influence from beings belonging to another order? And if so, may we not be aided, inspired, guided, by a cloud of witnesses,—not witnesses only, but helpers, agents like ourselves of the immanent God?

How do we know that in the mental sphere these cannot answer prayer, as we in the physical? It is not a speculation only, it is a question for experience to decide. Are we conscious of guidance; do we feel that prayers are answered? that power to do, and to will, and to think, is given us? Many there are who with devout thankfulness will say yes.

They attribute it to the Deity; so can we attribute everything to the Deity, from thunder and lightning down to daily bread; but is it direct action? Does He not distribute the work among agents? That is what analogy suggests, but it is difficult to discriminate; and it is not necessary; the whole is linked together,

"Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

and through it all His energising Spirit runs. On any hypothesis it must be to the Lord that we pray—to the highest we know or can conceive; but the answer shall come in ways we do not know, and there must always be a far Higher than ever we can conceive.

Religious people seem to be losing some of their faith in prayer: they think it scientific not to pray in the sense of simple petition. They may be right: it may be the highest attitude never to ask for anything specific, only for acquiescence. If saints feel it so, they are doubtless right but, so far as ordinary science has anything to say to the contrary, a more childlike attitude might turn out truer, more in accordance with the total scheme. Prayer for a fancied good that might really be an injury, would be foolish; prayer for breach of law would be not foolish only but profane; but who are we to dogmatise too positively concerning law? A martyr may have prayed that he should not feel the fire. Can it be doubted that, whether through what we call hypnotic suggestion or by some other name, the granting of it was at least possible? Prayer, we have been told, is a mighty engine of achievement, but we have ceased to believe it. Why should we be so incredulous? Even in medicine, for instance, it is not really absurd to suggest that drugs and no prayer may be almost as foolish as prayer and no drugs.[1] Mental and phys-

[1] Diseases are like weeds; gardening is a bacteriological problem. Some bacteria are good and useful and necessary; they act in digestion, in manures, etc.; others are baleful and mean disease. The gardener, like the physician, has to cultivate the plants and eradicate the weeds.

ical are interlocked. The crudities of "faith-healing" have a germ of truth, perhaps as much truth as can be claimed by those who condemn them. How do we know that each is not ignoring one side, that each is but half educated, each only adopting half measures? The whole truth may be completer and saner than the sectaries dream: more things may be

> "wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of."

We are not bodies alone, nor spirits alone, but both; our bodies isolate us, our spirits unite us: if I may venture on the construction of two lines, we are like

> Floating lonely icebergs, our crests above the ocean,
> With deeply submerged portions united by the sea.

The conscious part is knowing; the subconscious part is ignorant: yet the subconscious can achieve results the conscious can by no means either understand or perform. Witness the physical operations of "suggestion" and the occasional lucidity of trance.

Each one of us has a great region of the sub-

If he ignores the existence of weeds and says they are all plants, he speaks truth as a botanist, but is not a practical gardener. If he says, "Gardening is all effort on my part, and nothing comes from the sky, I will dig and I will water, I care not for casual rain or for sun," he errs foolishly on one side. If he says, "The sun and the rain do everything, there is no need for my exertion," he errs on the other side, and errs more dangerously; because he *can* abstain from action, whereas he cannot exclude rain and sun, however much he presumes to ignore them: he ought to be a part of the agency at work. Sobriety and sanity consist in recognising all the operative causes—spiritual, mental, and material.

conscious, to which we do not and need not attend: only let us not deny it, let us not cut ourselves off from its sustaining power. If we have instinct for worship, for prayer, for communion with saints or with Deity, let us trust that instinct, for there lies the true realm of religion. We may try to raise the subconscious region into the light of day, and study it with our intellect also; but let us not assume that our present conscious intelligence is already so well informed that its knowledge exhausts or determines or bounds the region of the true and the impossible.

IV

As to what is scientifically possible or impossible, anything not self-contradictory or inconsistent with other truth is *possible*. Speaking from our present scientific ignorance, and in spite of the extract from Professor Tyndall quoted previously, this statement must be accepted as literally true, for all we know to the contrary. There may be reasons why certain things do not occur: our experience tells us that they do not, and we may judge that there is some reason why they do not. There may be an adaptation, an arrangement among the forces of nature—the forces of nature in their widest sense—which enchains them and screens us from their destructive action; after the same sort of fashion as the atmosphere screens the earth from the furious meteoric buffeting it would otherwise encounter on its portent-

ous journey through ever new and untried depths of space.[1]

We may indeed be well protected; we must, else we should not be here; but as to what is *possible*—think of any lower creature, low enough in the scale of existence to ignore us, and to treat us, too, as among the forces of nature, and then let us bethink ourselves of how we may appear, not to God or to any infinite being, but to some personal intelligence high above us in the scale of existence. Consider a colony of ants, and conceive them conscious at their level; what know they of fate and of the future? Much what we know. They may think themselves governed by uniform law—uniform, that is, even to their understanding—the march of the seasons, the struggle for existence, the weight of the soil, the properties of matter as they encounter it—no more. For centuries they may have continued thus; when one day, quite unexpectedly, a shipwrecked sailor strolling round kicks their ant-hill over. To and fro they run, overwhelmed with the catastrophe. What shall hinder his crushing them with his heel? *Laborare est orare* in their case. Let them watch him and see, or fancy that he sees, in their movements the signs of industry, of system, of struggle against untoward circumstances; let him note the moving of eggs, the trying to save and to repair—the act of destruction may by that means be averted.

[1] The earth does not describe anything like a closed curve per annum; the sun advances rather more than ten miles per second, in what is practically a straight line.

Just as our earth is midway among the lumps of matter, neither small like a meteoric stone, nor gigantic like a sun, so may be the place we, the human race, occupy in the scale of existence. All our ordinary views are based on the notion that we are highest in the scale; upset that notion and anything is possible. Possible, but we have to ascertain the facts: not what might, but what does occur. Into the lives of the lower creatures caprice assuredly seems to enter; the treatment of a fly by a child is capricious, and may be regarded as puzzling to the fly. As we rise in the scale of existence we hope that things get better; we have experience that they do. It may be said that up to a point in the scale of life vice and caprice increase; that the lower organisms and the plant world know nothing of them, and that man has been most wicked of all; but they reach a maximum at a certain stage—a stage the best of the human race have already passed—and we need not postulate either vice or caprice in our far superiors. Men have thought themselves the sport of the gods before now, but let us hope they were mistaken. Such thoughts would lead to madness and despair. We do not know the laws which govern the interaction of different orders of intelligence, nor do we know how much may depend on our own attitude and conduct. It may be that prayer is an instrument which can control or influence higher agencies, and by its neglect we may be losing the use of a mighty engine to help on our lives and those of others.

The Universe is huge and awful every way, we

might so easily be crushed by it; we need the help of every agency available, and if we had no helpers we should stand a poor chance. The loneliness of it when we leave the planet would be appalling; sometimes even here the loneliness is great.

What the "protecting atmosphere" for our disembodied souls may be, I know not. Some may liken the protection to the care of a man for a dog, of a woman for a child, of a far-seeing minister for a race of bewildered slaves; while others may dash aside the contemplation of all intermediate agencies, and feel themselves safe and enfolded in the protecting love of God Himself.

The region of true Religion and the region of a completer Science are one.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION, SCIENCE AND MIRACLE

I. Science and Religion

THERE was a time when religious people distrusted the increase of knowledge, and condemned the mental attitude which takes delight in its pursuit, being in dread lest part of the foundation of their faith should be undermined by a too ruthless and unqualified spirit of investigation.

There has been a time when men engaged in the quest of systematic knowledge had an idea that the results of their studies would be destructive not only of outlying accretions but of substantial portions of the edifice of religion which has been gradually erected by the prophets and saints of humanity.

Both these epochs will soon belong to history. Thoughtful men realise that truth is the important thing, and that to take refuge in any shelter less substantial than the truth is to render themselves liable to abject exposure when a storm comes on. Few are not aware that it is a sign of unbalanced judgment to conclude, on the strength of a few momentous discoveries, that the whole structure of religious belief, built up through the ages by the developing

human race from fundamental emotions and instincts and experiences, is unsubstantial and insecure.

The business of Science, including in that term, for present purposes, philosophy and the science of criticism, is with foundations; the business of Religion is with superstructure. Science has laboriously laid a solid foundation of great strength, and its votaries have rejoiced over it; though their joy must perforce be somewhat dumb and inexpressive until the more vocal apostles of art and literature and music are able to decorate it with their light and more winsome tracery: so for the present the structure of science strikes a stranger as severe and forbidding. In a neighbouring territory Religion occupies a splendid building—a gorgeously-decorated palace; concerning which, Science, not yet having discovered a satisfactory basis, is sometimes inclined to suspect that it is phantasmal and mainly supported on legend.

Without any controversy it may be admitted that the foundation and the superstructure, as at present known, are inadequately fitted together; and that there is, in consequence, an apparent dislocation. Men of science have exclaimed that all solid truth is in their keeping; adopting in that sense the words of the poet:

> "To the solid ground
> Of Nature trusts the mind which builds for aye."

On the other hand men of Religion snugly ensconced in their traditional eyrie, and objecting to the digging and the hammering below, have shud-

dered as the artificial props and pillars by which they supposed it to be buttressed gave way one after another; and have doubted whether they could continue to enjoy peace in their exalted home if it turned out that part of it was suspended in air, without any perceptible foundation at all, like the phantom city in "Gareth and Lynette" whereof it could be said:

> "the city is built
> To music, therefore never built at all,
> And therefore built for ever."

Remarks as to lack of solid foundation may be regarded as typical of the mild kind of sarcasm which people with superficial smattering of popular science sometimes try to pour upon religion. They think that to accuse a system of being devoid of solid foundation is equivalent to denying its stability. On the contrary, as Tennyson no doubt perceived, the absence of anything that may crumble or decay, or be shaken by an earthquake, is a safeguard rather than a danger. It is the absence of material foundation that makes the Earth itself, for instance, so secure: if it were based upon a pedestal, or otherwise solidly supported, we might be anxious about the stability and durability of the support. As it is, it floats securely in the emptiness of space.

Similarly the persistence of its diurnal spin is secured by the absence of anything to stop it: not by any maintaining mechanism.

To say that a system does not rest upon one special fact is not to impugn its stability. The body of

scientific truth rests on no solitary material fact or group of facts, but on a basis of harmony and consistency between facts: its support and ultimate sanction is of no material character. To conceive of Christianity as built upon an Empty Tomb, or any other plain physical or historical fact, is dangerous. To base it upon the primary facts of consciousness or upon direct spiritual experience, as Paul did, is safer.[1] There are parts of the structure of Religion which may safely be underpinned by physical science: the theory of death and of continued personal existence is one of them; there are many others and there will be more. But there are and always will be vast religious regions for which that kind of scientific foundation would be an impertinence, though a scientific contribution is appropriate. Perhaps these may be summed up in some such phrase as "the relation of the soul to God."

Assertions are made concerning material facts in the name of religion; these science is bound to criticise. Testimony is borne to inner personal experience; on that physical science does well to be silent. Nevertheless many of us are impressed with the conviction that everything in the universe may become intelligible if we go the right way to work; and

[1] It will be represented that I am here intending to cast doubt upon a fundamental tenet of the Church. That is not my intention. My contention here is merely that a great structure should not rest upon a point. So might a lawyer properly say: "To base a legal decision upon the position of a comma, or other punctuation,—however undisputed its occurrence—is dangerous; to base it upon the general sense of a document is safer."

so we are coming to recognise, on the one hand, that every system of truth must be intimately connected with every other, and that this connection will constitute a trustworthy support as soon as it is revealed by the progress of knowledge; and on the other hand, that the extensive foundation of truth now being laid by scientific workers will ultimately support a gorgeous building of æsthetic feeling and religious faith.

Theologians have been apt to be too easily satisfied with a pretended foundation that would not stand scientific scrutiny; they seem to believe that the religious edifice, with its mighty halls for the human spirit, can rest upon some event or statement, instead of upon man's nature as a whole; and they are apt to decline to reconsider their formulæ in the light of fuller knowledge and development.

Scientific men, on the other hand, have been liable to suppose that no foundation which they have not themselves laid can be of a substantial character, thereby ignoring the possibility of an ancestral accumulation of sound through unformulated experience. And a few of the less considerate, about a quarter of a century ago, amused themselves by instituting a kind of jubilant rat-hunt under the venerable theological edifice: a procedure necessarily obnoxious to its occupants. The exploration was unpleasant, but its results have been purifying and healthful, and the permanent substratum of fact will in due time be cleared of the decaying refuse of centuries.

Some of the more seriously conducted controversy

between the two contending parties turned upon those frequently discussed topics—the possibility of the Miraculous, and the efficacy of Prayer. Let us elaborate the thesis maintained in the last chapter, by discussing further, though still briefly, these two connected subjects.

II. Meaning of Miracle

We must begin by admitting that the term "miracle" is ambiguous, and that no discussion which takes that term as a basis can be very fruitful, since the combatants may all be meaning different things.

1. One user of the term may mean merely an unusual event of which we do not know the history and cause, a bare wonder or prodigy; such an event as the course of nature may, for all we know, bring about once in ten thousand years or so, leaving no record of its occurrence in the past and no anticipatory probability of its re-occurrence in the future. The raining down of fire on Sodom, or on Pompeii; the sudden engulphing of Korah, or of Marcus Curtius, or, on a different plane, the advent of some transcendent genius, or even of a personality so lofty as to be called divine, may serve as examples.

2. Another employer of the term "miracle" may add to this idea a definite hypothesis, and may mean an act due to unknown intelligent and living agencies operating in a self-willed and unpredictable manner, thus effecting changes that would not otherwise have occurred and that are not in the regular course of nature. The easiest example to think of is one

wherein the lower animals are chiefly concerned; for instance, consider the case of the community of an ant-hill, on a lonely uninhabited island, undisturbed for centuries, whose dwelling is kicked over one day by a shipwrecked sailor. They had reason to suppose that events were uniform, and all their difficulties ancestrally known; but they are perturbed by an unintelligible miracle. A different illustration is afforded by the presence of an obtrusive but unsuspected live insect in a galvanometer or other measuring instrument in a physical laboratory; whereby metrical observations would be complicated, and all regularity perturbed, in a puzzling and capricious and, to half-instructed knowledge, supernatural, or even diabolical, manner. Not dissimilar are some of the asserted events in a Séance Room.

3. Another may use the term "miracle" to mean the utilisation of unknown laws say of healing or of communication; laws unknown and unformulated, but instinctively put into operation by mental activity of some kind,—sometimes through the unconscious influence of so-called self-suggestion, sometimes through the activity of another mind, or through the personal agency of highly gifted beings, operating on others; laws whereby time and space appear temporarily suspended, or extraordinary cures are effected, or other effects produced, such as the levitations and other physical phenomena related of the saints.

4. Another may incorporate with the word "miracle" a still further infusion of theory, and may mean

always a direct interposition of Divine Providence, whereby at some one time and place a perfectly unique occurrence is brought about, which is out of relation with the established order of things, is not due to what has gone before, and is not likely to occur again. The most striking examples of what can be claimed under this head are connected with the personality of Jesus Christ, notably the Virgin Birth and the Empty Tomb; by which I mean the more material and controversial aspects of those generally accepted doctrines—the Incarnation and the Resurrection.

To summarise this part, the four categories are: (1) A natural or orderly though unusual portent, (2) a disturbance due to unknown live or capricious agencies, (3) a utilisation by mental or spiritual power of unknown laws, (4) direct interposition of the Deity.

III. Arguments concerning the Miraculous.

In some cases an argument concerning the so-called miraculous will turn upon the question whether such things are theoretically possible.

In other cases it will turn upon whether or not they have ever actually happened.

In a third case the argument will be directed to the question whether they happened or not on some particular occasion.

And in a fourth case the argument will hinge upon the particular category under which any assigned occurrence is to be placed:—

For instance, take a circumstance which undoubt-

edly has occurred, one upon the actual existence of which there can be no dispute, and yet one of which the history and manner is quite unknown. Take, for instance, the origin of Life; or to be more definite, say the origin of life on any given planet, the Earth for instance. There is practically no doubt that the Earth was once a hot and molten and sterile globe. There is no doubt at all that it is now the abode of an immense variety of living organic nature. How did that life arise? Is it an event to be placed under head (1), as an unexpected outcome of the ordinary course of nature, a development naturally following upon the formation of extremely complex molecular aggregates—protoplasm and the like—as the Earth cooled; or must it be placed under head (4), as due to the direct Fiat of the Eternal?

Again, take the existence of Christianity as a living force in the world of to-day. This is based upon a series of events of undoubtedly substantial truth centering round a historical personage; under which category is that to be placed? Was his advent to be regarded as analogous to the appearance of a mighty genius such as may at any time revolutionise the course of human history; or is he to be regarded as a direct manifestation and incarnation of the Deity Himself?

I am using these great themes as illustrations merely, for our present purpose; I have no intention of entering upon them in this chapter. They are questions which have been asked, and presumably answered, again and again; and it is on lines such as

these that debates concerning the miraculous are usually conducted. But what I want to say is that so long as we keep the discussion on these lines, and ask this sort of question, though we shall succeed in emphasizing difficulties, we shall not progress far towards a solution of any of them: nor shall we gain much aid towards life.

IV. Law and Guidance

The way to progress is not thus to lose ourselves in detail and in confusing estimates of possibilities, but to consider two main issues which may very briefly be formulated thus:

1. Are we to believe in irrefragable law?
2. Are we to believe in spiritual guidance?

If we affirm the first of these issues we accept an orderly and systematic universe, with no arbitrary cataclysms and no breaks in its essential continuity. Catastrophes occur, but they occur in the regular course of events, they are not brought about by capricious and lawless agencies; they are a part of the entire cosmos, regulated on the principle of unity and uniformity: though to the dwellers in any time and place, from whose senses most of the cosmos is hidden, they may appear to be sudden and portentous dislocations of natural order.

So much is granted if we accept the first of the above issues. If we accept the second, we accept a purposeful and directed universe, carrying on its evo-

lutionary processes from an inevitable past into an anticipated future with a definite aim; not left to the random control of inorganic forces like a motor-car which has lost its driver, but permeated throughout by mind and intention and foresight and will. Not mere energy, but constantly directed energy—the energy being controlled by something which is not energy, nor akin to energy, something which presumably is immanent in the universe and is akin to life and mind.

The alternative to these two beliefs is a universe of random chance and capricious disorder, not a cosmos or universe at all—a multiverse rather. Consequently I take it that we all hold to one or other of these two beliefs. But do we and can we hold to both?

So far as I conceive my present mission, it is to urge that the two beliefs are not inconsistent with each other, and that we may and should contemplate and gradually feel our way towards accepting both.

1. We must realise that the Whole is a single undeviating law-saturated cosmos;
2. But we must also realise that the Whole consists not of matter and motion alone, nor yet of spirit and will alone, but of both and all; we must even yet further, and enormously, enlarge our conception of what the Whole contains.

Scientific men have preached the first of these desiderata, but have been liable to take a narrow view

regarding the second. Keenly alive to law, and knowledge, and material fact, they have been occasionally blind to art, to emotion, to poetry, and to the higher mental and spiritual environment which inspires and glorifies the realm of knowledge.

The temptation of religious men has also lain in the direction of too narrow exclusiveness; for they have been so occupied with their own conceptions of the fulness of things that they have failed to grasp what is implied by a strictly orderly cosmos. They have allowed the emotional content to overpower the intellectual, and have too often ignored, disliked, and practically rejected, an integral portion of the scheme,—appearing to desire, what no one can really wish for, a world of uncertainty and caprice, where effects can be produced without adequate cause, and where the connection of antecedent and consequent can be arbitrarily dislocated.

The same error has therefore dogged the steps of both classes of men. An acceptance of miracle, in the crude sense of arbitrary intervention and special providence, is appropriate to those who feel strangled in the grip of inorganic and mechanical law, without being able to reconcile it with the idea of friendly guidance and intelligent control. And a denial of miracle, in every sense, that is of all providential leading, and all controlling intelligence, may be the outcome of the same kind of inability in people of different temperament,—people who cannot recognise a directing intelligence in the midst of law and order, who regard the absence of dislocation and inter-

ference as a mark of the inorganic, the mechanical, the inexorable. Wherefore the denial of miracle has often led to a sort of practical atheism and to an assertion of the valuelessness of prayer.

But to those who are able to combine the acceptance of both the above faiths, prayer is part of the orderly cosmos, and may be an efficient portion of the guiding and controlling will; somewhat as the desire of the inhabitants of a town for a civic improvement may be a part of the agency which ultimately brings it about, no matter whether the city be representatively or autocratically governed.

The two beliefs cannot be logically and effectively combined by those who think of themselves as something detached from and outside the cosmos, operating on it externally and seeking to modify its manifestations by vain petitions addressed to a system of ordered force. To such persons the above propositions must seem contradictory or mutually exclusive. But if we can grasp the idea that we ourselves are an intimate part of the whole scheme, that our wishes and desires are a part of the controlling and guiding will,—then our mental action cannot but be efficient, if we exercise it in accordance with the highest and truest laws of our being.

V. Miracle and Science

How mind can act on matter at all is at present a puzzle. Life is clearly the intermediary, and a live thing can perform actions and bring about changes in the material world that cannot be predicted by me-

chanics and that would not otherwise have occurred. There have been many who believe that such changes affect the conservation of energy, and render that law doubtful, unless life itself be one of the forms of energy. But my contention is that life is, from the mechanical point of view, not a force nor an energy, but only a guiding and directing influence: affecting the quantity of energy no whit. It directs terrestrial energy along a certain channel, it utilises the energies which are running to waste, so to speak, and guides them in a specific way; as a waterfall may be made to light a town instead of merely dashing itself picturesquely against rocks.

This subject of "guidance" is a large one, and I must be brief. I have dealt with it in my book on *Life and Matter;* but it is a point of fundamental importance, and I will try to exhibit it still more clearly and illustrate what I mean by guidance, namely, the influencing of activity without "work," the direction of energy without generating it, the utilising and guiding existent activity for preconceived and purposed ends. To show that work is not necessary for guidance even in mechanics, we may instance the following:

A railway guides a train to its destination; while the engine supplies the energy and propels it. Any force exerted by the rails is perpendicular to the motion and does no work; unless, indeed, by friction it exerts a retarding force not perpendicular to motion.

But if this be used as a parable it may be objected that the exertion of force is itself a mechanical oper-

ation, even though no work is done; and that a force cannot act without altering the distribution of momentum, though it must leave the amount unaltered.

Quite true, action and reaction are always equal and opposite, and both are always to be found in the physical world. Life may call out a stress in that world which would not otherwise exist then and there; but it sustains none of the reaction—never does it exert an unbalanced force, never does it generate any momentum—no more than it generates energy. It only directs operations which thoroughly obey the laws of mechanics, and from the mechanical point of view are complete in the physical world.

Life and mind have determined where the rails shall be laid down, and when and whence and whither the trains are to be run, but they exert no iota of force upon them; so the distinction between a propelling and a deflecting force is a needless distinction for our present purposes. Whenever a force is exerted it is exerted as a stress between two bodies, whether it be a working or a guiding force.

But, for the kind of guidance exercised by life, force, through a common intermediary, is not a necessary one. A path can guide a traveller to his destination without exerting any force upon him at all. Conversely, a railway time-table, emanating from the Traffic Manager's office, determines the running of many trains; but it is not a form of energy, nor does it exert force.

The liberation of energy can be accomplished by work entirely incommensurate with the result: and so

ultimately it would appear that it can be achieved by none at all, through the mysterious intervention of the brain as a connector between the psychical and physical worlds, which otherwise would not be in touch.

All that a human being can do is to get some of the energy from the outside world into his muscles by the act of feeding; and when there it is amenable to nerve messages sent from his brain, and so ultimately from his mind,—which apparently has the power of liberating detents and pulling triggers in that strange physiological link with another order of existence. How the brain acts: how a thought or an act of will can liberate the energy of a brain cell in a particular direction: is not yet known. It belongs to the mysterious borderland between physics and psychology. We can only appeal to the fact of consciousness, and illustrate it by saying that a trigger can precipitate an explosion, of violence quite incommensurable with that of the energy required to pull the trigger; and the work done in pulling the trigger results in infinitesimal local heat, of just the same magnitude whether the prepared explosion results or not: it is independent also of the direction and the epoch of the shot. The aim, and the moment at which to pull the trigger, are determined by the mind of the sportsman, without affecting the question of energy.

Life is not energy, but it is the director of energy, and of matter. It achieves results which would not otherwise have occurred. Even plant life does that, the green leaves direct the energy of sunshine to the decomposition and re-invigoration of thoroughly

burned and stable compounds, carbonic acid and water.

Engineering and architectural operations produce Forth Bridges, and tunnels, and buildings of a character instinct with mind and purpose. The organic energy needed for the operation is brought by the navvies in their tin cans, and they direct that energy so as to exert propulsive force and do the work; but the controlling mind is that of the architect and the engineer.

The only thing that prevents our calling it a miracle is that we are so thoroughly accustomed to the occurrence.

Mind determines. Life directs. The material and energetic universe is dominated and controlled by these agencies; which utilise the energy they find available, and direct it into appropriate channels.

Finally, whatever difficulties we may feel about understanding the process, we ought not to be accused of dualism by reason of our insistence on the separate categories of life and mind on the one hand, and body and mechanism on the other. However dominant one of these predicaments may be over the other, they may be all ultimately but parts of some comprehensive whole. Domination or even antagonism between the parts of a whole is common enough. One man can dominate or can oppose another, although both are members of the same race, nation, or family. The head can dominate a limb, though both are parts of a single body. So also can Mind and Life dominate and transcend matter and energy. And they do

this just as effectually, even though in some ultimate monistic unity they can be all recognised as parts or aspects of some one stupendous Reality.

VI. Miracle and Religion

So much for general considerations, which in this case are by far the most important; we may now descend to a few practical remarks. When speaking of miracles, what people are usually interested in are miracles in detail; they have usually some special instances in their minds, and they want those instances discussed. Using the term "miracle" in quite a popular sense, and meaning by it nothing defined or susceptible of definition, but simply the list of miracles they find recorded in the Bible or in the lives of the Saints, they ask, "Has the progress of science rendered the occurrence of these things more or less probable?" The first and obvious answer,—that it has rendered them subjectively less probable, that is to say, less easy of acceptance than they were at the time of their record, or even fifty years ago,—is too manifest to require giving. For till recently they were hardly questioned, except here and there by a few adventurous spirits who were liable to be stigmatised as "infidel" for being faithful to their convictions.

But if the subjective aspect is passed by as too obvious, and if it is asked whether science has made the occurrence of the so-called miracles objectively more reasonably probable,—it is controversial, but it is not absurd, to answer concerning several of them—"in

some respects, yes":—an answer which is most readily applicable to the miracles of healing. And why? Because in modern medical practice, especially as developed on the Continent, some of these occurrences can be imitated to-day; for instance, the production, by self or other suggestion, of wounds analogous to the "stigmata." Whether this fact, assuming it for the moment to be a fact, is one to be welcomed or otherwise by interpreters of Holy Writ, is a question for themselves to answer.

The reasonable scientific view is that a complete knowledge of nature would enable us to recognise the *rationale* of every event which ever occurred, or ever can occur; and so it would seem to follow concerning any given apparent prodigy—either that it did not happen as related, or else that it happened in accordance with natural laws of which at present we are more or less ignorant. Some of the popularly-quoted miracles certainly did not happen, and were never by competent judges really thought to have happened, as narrated by the poet or rhapsodist of the time. To regard the poetic suspension of the motion of the sun (or earth) as a scientific statement is absurd. But while it is mere illiteracy to suppose that all classes of recorded miracle represent statements of fact—since careful precision in recording fact is a rather modern accomplishment, and not likely to be regarded then, nor in some quarters even now, as a particularly desirable or edifying accomplishment, yet certain of them may be worthy of consideration, as at any rate believed by the recorder to have occurred as he states

them; and, besides, as not being wholly outside the range of conceivable possibility.

But in so far as they are recognised as reasonably possible, they surely lose their power as specifically religious evidence, and become merely a hint towards an extension of scientific fact. I suppose it must be admitted that the more natural and so to speak commonplace an event becomes, the less exceptional religious significance can be accorded to it. Nevertheless it may be legitimate to recognise that a human being of specially lofty character may, perhaps inevitably, be endowed with faculties and powers beyond the present scope of the race: faculties and powers fully intelligible neither to himself nor to anyone else. Even a genius has an inkling of exceptional powers. No one can explain, or render ordinarily probable *à priori,* the existence of a child-prodigy capable of performances in music or in arithmetic beyond the power of nearly all adults. Genius combined with sainthood may achieve what to ordinary men are marvels and miracles. Even without sainthood, and without genius, some abnormally constituted species of the human race—possibly anticipating future development as a kind of premature sport, or possibly displaying the remains of ancestral powers now nearly lost to the race—are found to possess faculties unusual and incredible, faculties which in fact are widely and vigorously disbelieved by nearly all who have not studied them.

Whether a given prophet has extraordinary power, and how far his power extends, is a matter for evi-

dence; but whatever his power, it is by the content of his message that he is to be judged, not by some accompanying extension of the customary control of mind over matter. All this is well-worn ground, and I refrain from emphasising a great number of obvious contentions, *e.g.*, that it is quite wrong to accept a bad and immoral message because it is accompanied by conjuring tricks of amazing ingenuity; and the like. The worst of men can do things beyond the power of an insect, things which to its consciousness, if it had any, would be miraculous.

Either there are modes of existence higher than that displayed by our ordinary selves, or there are not. If there are, it is the business of science to ascertain their existence and what they can do in the way of interaction with our material surroundings: it is not necessarily the business of religion at all, though like everything else it will have a bearing on religion. But, because it is a nascent and infantile branch of science, is it therefore of little importance or small interest? By no means. All these things are essentially worthy of investigation, and they will be investigated by those who feel called to the work, although they are looked at askance by some of the scientific magnates of to-day. The gain of realising that they are unessential to religion and to human hopes and fears, is that their investigation can be conducted in a cool calm spirit, without prejudice and without preconception, with no object in view but simple ascertainment of truth. The atmosphere of religion should be recognised as enveloping and

permeating everything, and should not be specially or exclusively sought as an emanation from signs and wonders.

Strange and ultranormal things may happen, and are well worthy of study, but they are not to be regarded as especially holy. Some of them may represent either extension or survival of human faculty, while others may be an inevitable endowment or attribute of a sufficiently lofty character; but none of them can be accepted without investigation. Testimony concerning such things is to be treated in a sceptical and yet open-minded spirit; the results of theory and experiment are to be utilised, as in any other branch of natural knowledge; and indiscriminate dogmatic rejection is as inappropriate as wholesale uncritical acceptance.

The bearing on the hopes and fears of humanity of such unusual facts as can be verified may be considerable, but they bear no exceptional witness to guidance and control. Guidance and control, if admitted at all, must be regarded as constant and continuous; and it is just this uniform character that makes them so difficult to recognise. It is always difficult to perceive or apprehend anything which is perfectly regular and continuous. Those fish, for instance, which are submerged in ocean-depths, beyond the reach of waves and tides, are probably utterly unconscious of the existence of water; and, however intelligent, they can have but little reason to believe in that medium, notwithstanding that their

whole being, life, and motion, is dependent upon it from instant to instant. The motion of the earth, again, furious rush though it is—fifty times faster than a cannon ball—is quite inappreciable to our senses; it has to be inferred from celestial observations, and it was strenuously disbelieved by the agnostics of an earlier day.

Uniformity is always difficult to grasp—our senses are not made for it; and yet it is characteristic of everything that is most efficient. Jerks and jolts are easy to appreciate, but they do not conduce to progress. Steady motion is what conveys us on our way, collisions are but a retarding influence. The seeker after miracle, in the exceptional and narrow or exclusive sense, is pining for a catastrophe; the investigator of miracle, in the continuous and broad or comprehensive sense, has the universe for a laboratory.

VII. Human Experience

Let us survey our position.

We find ourselves for a few score years incarnate intelligences on this planet; we have not always been here, and we shall not always be here: we are here in fact, each of us, for but a very short period; but we can study the conditions of existence while here, and we perceive clearly that a certain amount of guidance and control are in our hands. For better for worse we can, and our legislators do, influence the destinies of the planet. The process is called "making history." We can all, even the humblest, to some extent

influence the destinies of individuals with whom we come into contact. We have therefore a certain sense of power and responsibility.

It is not likely that we are the only, or the highest, intelligent agents in the whole wide universe, nor that we possess faculties and powers denied to all else; nor is it likely that our own activity will be always as limited as it is now. The Parable of the Talents is full of meaning, and it contains a meaning that is not often brought out.

It is absurd to deny the attributes of guidance and intelligence and personality and love to the Whole, seeing that we are part of the Whole, and are personally aware of what we mean by those words in ourselves. These attributes are existent therefore, and cannot be denied; cannot be denied even to the Deity.

Is the planet subject to intelligent control? We know that it is: we ourselves can change the course of rivers for predestined ends, we can make highways, can unite oceans, can devise inventions, can make new compounds, can transmute species, can plan fresh variety of organic life; we can create works of art; we can embody new ideas and lofty emotions in forms of language and music, and can leave them as Platonic offspring[1] to remote posterity. Our power is doubtless limited, but we can surely learn to do far more than we have yet so far in the infancy of humanity accomplished; more even than we have yet conjectured as within the range of possibility.

[1] *Symposium*, 209.

Our progress already has been considerable. It is but a moderate time since our greatest men were chipping flints and carving bones into the likeness of reindeer. More recently they became able to build cathedrals and make poems. Now we are momentarily diverted from immortal pursuits by vivid interest in that kind of competition which has replaced the competition of the sword, and by those extraordinary inequalities of possession and privilege which have resulted from the invention of an indestructible and transmissible form of riches, a form over which neither moth nor rust has any power. We raise an increase of smoke, and offer sacrifices of squalor and ugliness, in worship of this new idol. But it will pass; human life is not meant to continue as it is now in city slums; nor is the strenuous futility of mere accumulation likely to satisfy people when once they have been really educated; the world is beautiful, and may be far more widely happy than it has been yet. Those who have preached this hitherto have been heard with deaf ears, but some day we shall awake to a sense of our true planetary importance and shall recognise the higher possibilities of existence. Then shall we realise and practically believe what is involved in those words of poetic insight:

> The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth hath He given to the children of men.

There is a vast truth in this yet to be discovered; power and influence and responsibility lie before us, appalling in their magnitude, and as yet we are but

children playing on the stage before the curtain is rolled up for the drama in which we are to take part.

But we are not left to our own devices: we of this living generation are not alone in the universe. What we call the individual is strengthened by elements emerging from the social whole out of which he is born. We are not things of yesterday, nor of to-morrow. We do not indeed remember our past, we are not aware of our future, but in common with everything else we must have had a past and must be going to have a future. Some day we may find ourselves able to realise both.

Meanwhile, what has been our experience here? We have not been left solitary. Every newcomer to the planet, however helpless and strange he be, finds friends awaiting him, devoted and self-sacrificing friends, eager to care for and protect his infancy and to train him in the ways of this curious world. It is typical of what goes on throughout conscious existence; the guidance which we exert, and to which we are subject now, is but a phase of something running through the universe. And when the time comes for us to quit this sphere and enter some larger field of action, I doubt not that we shall find there also that kindness and help and patience and love, without which no existence would be tolerable or even at some stages possible.

Miracles lie all around us: only they are not miraculous. Special providences envelop us: only they are not special. Prayer is a means of communication as natural and as simple as is speech.

Realise that you are part of a great orderly and mutually helpful cosmos, that you are not stranded or isolated in a foreign universe, but that you are part of it and closely akin to it; and your sense of sympathy will be enlarged, your power of free communication will be opened, and the heartfelt aspiration and communion and petition that we call prayer will come as easily and as naturally as converse with those human friends and relations whose visible bodily presence gladdens and enriches your present life.

SECTION II—CORPORATE WORSHIP AND SERVICE

CHAPTER IV

THE ALLEGED INDIFFERENCE OF LAYMEN TO RELIGION

THE average layman of the present day is often accused of being indifferent to religion. But the allegation as worded seems to me untrue, unless by "laymen" is understood the great mass of the people. Even then I doubt if they are indifferent to real religion, or to reality and sincerity and lofty-mindedness of any kind. No one can be really indifferent to the great problem of existence— the mysteries of life and death and of human destiny. It is doubtful whether people in general can be considered indifferent even to theology, of a sort,—not to problems connected with apparent oppositions between knowledge and faith, for instance, nor to questions of Biblical interpretation and the nature of Inspiration. They are not unopen to the influence of a saintly life, or disposed to treat lightly such fundamental subjects as the existence of Deity and the relations between man and God.

I gather that they are not indifferent in this country to these topics, because they seem always willing to read about them or to discuss them. And if this refers chiefly to the more educated classes, it may be maintained on behalf of the masses that their apparently perennial excitement about what doctrines

shall be taught to small children, though it may lack lucidity, seems to argue anything but indifference.

In Germany and France, so far as I can judge, people in general do not care in the same way to discuss religious questions, and theological magazines are confined to specialists; there is little or nothing of general interest and wide circulation on the subject. In those countries minds seems closed, either in the positive or in the negative direction, as regards religious beliefs. But here it is otherwise, and I have heard it maintained at a discussion society that there was really nothing except religion and politics which was worth the trouble of getting excited about.

Nevertheless there is a sense in which people in this country are indifferent to something allied to religion —at any rate to its outward and visible manifestations. To Ecclesiasticism they are indifferent, and they do not in any great number go to church. I take the allegation which is here being dealt with to intend to ask the question, Why is this? Why have the outward and visible forms of religion lost hold [1] of both educated and uneducated people?

I believe that over-pressure is one answer—a general sense of the shortness of life and the immense amount there is to be done in it. This holds true whether the press of occupation is caused by the demands of pleasure, or of business, or of investigation,

[1] I say "lost" hold, because I suppose I may assume, from the churches which they erected, as well as from the example of truly Roman Catholic countries at the present day, that, in say the twelfth century, observance of the outward forms of religion once really had a firm grasp of the majority of Englishmen.

or of work for the public weal. In each case time is all too short for what can now be crowded into it. As soon as our faculties are well developed, and our influence fairly active, it is almost time to begin to think of being called to service elsewhere,—there is no leisure to expend in unprofitable directions.

Is going to church unprofitable, then? To some men often yes; to others, I suppose, always no: save in the sense that they have not profited by it. Perhaps to none is it quite unprofitable, but they may think it so. If it acted as a stimulus and an inspiration and a help to life, then surely people in general would not be so foolish as to be indifferent to it. But they may be mistaken; this is the age of strenuousness and high pressure, and it may be that a quiet two hours of peaceful meditation would be the very best sedative and rest-cure for many men whose activities are wearing them out. Some, and those the most strenuous of all, have found it so. Mr. Gladstone, for instance, was a studious attendant at public worship, and I should not be surprised to hear that the German Emperor and President Roosevelt are so likewise; possibly in their case partly as an example, but also quite possibly as a private solace.

One cannot but admire men, to whom every five minutes is of value, who thus give up large tracts of time to religious exercises; and it is possible that many active men who ignore this help would be the better in every way if they too submitted themselves to the same discipline. It may be one of those cases where more haste is the less speed, and where the public as-

sembling of ourselves together in a reverent and worshipful spirit would be a real contribution to vitality and power. Under certain conditions I feel sure that it would be so, but is it so under present conditions? The answer must depend partly on individual temperament, partly on the form of "service" available.

We must all be acquainted with the soothed and sympathetic feeling which is sometimes the result of attendance at a place of worship in company with others, even if nothing particular has been said worth carrying away: this is felt especially if the occasion is a symbolic one—a national thanksgiving, for instance, a demonstration of religious feeling by members of a scientific body, or other occasion of that kind; but if it is a mere everyday or weekly service, there must be some special harmony or congruity between the assembly and the words that have been said, or the ceremonies that have been performed, in order that the effect may be produced.

There appear to be some ecclesiastically minded persons who can derive sustenance from what to others may seem extraordinarily commonplace, or even childish, proceedings. I have seen Mr. Gladstone (the name of so great a man may be employed as illustration without impertinence) in an attitude of rapt and earnest attention,—not to the words of the Bible, which anyone might be glad to hear, nor to the words of the Prayer Book, which to those with a strongly-developed historic sense may carry with them a world of half-felt emotion—but to the utterance from the pulpit of a very ordinary discourse.

To most of us, however, this patient self-contribution to what is going on is denied; and the feeling with which some go away from an average place of worship is too often a feeling of irritation and regret for wasted time.

I have known men of energy supply the needed intellectual exercise, and contrive to stimulate their historic sense, by using a Latin Prayer Book and a Greek Testament; and something of the sort is sorely needed if one is to attempt to keep one's attention fixed on the ancient formularies, so familiar from childhood, and recited or chanted in so meaningless a manner.

The greater number of men, I believe, cultivate the habit of inattention during the greater part of the proceedings; and it is possible, though less easy, to preserve an attitude of mental inattention even when reciting formularies with the lips. To attend strenuously to the meaning of the clauses, in a creed, for instance, or even in the Lord's Prayer, is an effort. I do not believe it is often made. The words are slipped through, and if an idea is caught every now and again, that is all that can be expected. There was a time when this inattentive recital of the well-known and familiar could be tolerated; and before the days of education it was probably useful. To some it may be useful still—to others it is tedious. The fact is, the conventional English Church Service, or eclectic admixture of combined services, is too long, and, as I think, too mechanical. The Psalter as a whole is oppressively tedious—I speak for myself; many

of the chants one is weary of. The jewels would shine out more brightly if re-set. Some of the prayers are beautiful, or would be if they were properly read and were not spoiled by such frequent iteration. The little song at the end of each commandment is gorgeous when one hears it in the *Elijah,* but it gets tiresome at the ninth repetition. The "Confession" is historically interesting and sometimes perhaps appropriate, but as a rule it is excessive and unreal; and if ever true, it is not a thing one wishes to sing in public, nor indeed to *sing* at all, still less to pay a few illiterate boys and men to sing or monotone for one.

The *Te Deum,* on a national occasion, and sung slowly and emphatically, may be magnificent: as ordinarily treated it is almost useless, and seems only inserted as a convenient break between the Lessons; save occasionally when the setting and singing are specially good, in which case it can be enjoyed as an oratorio is enjoyed.

Some people may be able to utilise parts of the service which to others are tedious, and it may be contended that there is something for everybody; but for most people there must be long spells of dulness.

Length, however, is not the only objection: rapidity, which is perhaps a consequence of length, is another. Constantly and rapidly repeated formularies must surely tend to become mechanical. We jeer at the Thibetan water-worked praying-wheel as a mechanical form of prayer; and yet I can imagine a peasant joyfully going on with his labour in the fields, in the consciousness that his prayer was being

periodically turned up to heaven by the forces of nature, and his soul might send an aspiration after it, without interfering with the industry of his body. I doubt if such a ritual is really more mechanical than some English services which I have attended. I know well that any liturgy—the bleakest as well as the most ornate—can elevate the soul of the truly pious; but this minority cannot be included among the laity of whom indifference to religion is even alleged.

As to the recital of a few incredible articles in the creeds, I say nothing: they are not numerous, and hardly act as a strong deterrent except to a few earnest souls; if there were reality about the procedure, some of the clauses would be repellent, but as it is, the so-called Athanasian hymn can be chanted through with the rest: it is an interesting glimpse into an ingenious mediæval mind, to whom all the mystery of Divinity was expressible in words, with great positiveness of assurance, and with arithmetical precision of specification. But so far as the Creeds and the Articles contain things to which we and our teachers, the beneficed clergy, are expected to adhere, they may be to some extent deterrent; and it must be admitted that they require a good deal of explanation, and in manner of expression are rather out of date.

With all the enthusiasm for religion in the world, I would say to professional Churchmen, you really cannot continue to expect people to wade continually through so much mediæval and ecclesiastical lore. You must free the ship of official religion from in-

crustation: it is water-logged and overburdened now, and its sails are patched and outworn. I do not ask you to use steam or any new-fangled mode of propulsion. By all means keep your attachment to the past, but study reality and sincerity; strive to say what you really mean, and to say it in such way that others may know that you mean it, and may feel that they mean it too. The American Church has modified some of the features characteristic of the Anglican Liturgy; and its authorised Prayer Book contains interesting minor variations; all of which are devised in the interests of elasticity and freedom, yet subject to a commendable spirit of conservatism.

I trust that it is not an inseparable concomitant of a State religion that petitions should be tied and bound in rigid forms, that no audible prayer can be uttered except what is printed and authorised; it is pitiful when the only initiation permitted, even at times of stress, lies in the emphasis which may be thrown upon certain words, and the pauses that may be made after them. But at least the sermon is free. So let preachers realise their opportunities and make use of them, and let them no longer throw away their chance of moving the hearts of men towards a higher and more useful and unselfish life, by over-attention to the conventional arrangement called the Church's Year. The annual commemoration of everything is often made an excuse for laziness: it saves the trouble of choosing a subject. It provides a hackneyed theme ready to hand, to be treated in a conventional

and hackneyed manner. Silently and patiently the people sit there, and are not fed.

Religion is one thing; Church services as often conducted are quite another thing. Modification will be resented and opposed by some singularly minded lay Churchmen; nevertheless, if more eminent ability is to be attracted to the service of the Church, if the great body of the laity are to be reached in any serious and effective manner, modifications, excisions, and reforms are necessary. It is not religion to which people are indifferent.

CHAPTER V

UNION AND BREADTH

A Plea for Essential Unity Amid Formal Difference in a National Church

"The true tragedy is a conflict of right with right, not of right with wrong."—Hegel.

I SOON became aware that my little book called *The Substance of Faith* could hardly be regarded as an eirenicon in respect of the present English Education controversy, though I began it somewhat with that hope, and still think that it should be of some assistance in that direction; for it is apparent that the dispute between Church and Dissent is not only of long standing historically, but is intrinsically deepseated. It would be worth a considerable effort if the inflammation due to that chronic sore could be reduced; but the cure should be attempted, not by blinking or denying the reality of the differences, but rather by facing them resolutely and understanding their nature and origin before seeking to prescribe a remedy.

The dispute which is most alive to-day between State Church and Free Churches is not exactly religious: it seems to be rather ethnological or anthropological. That is to say, it may be held to represent a difference inherent in the varied nature of humanity,

and to correspond to the divergent views taken of religion by two different types of mind. If there is any truth in this statement, it ought surely to be possible to recognise the fact, and to adjust our arrangements to it, as to any other of the facts of nature.

It must have been frequently pointed out before —but sometimes statements bear and need repetition —that there are two chief religious types: one type valuing ceremony and artistic accessories and human organisation and intervention; while the other, thinking itself competent to dispense with what it may consider adventitious aids, seeks to worship, neither in temple nor even in mountain, but directly in spirit and in truth. This one thinks that the Holy Spirit is equally accessible to every individual. That one conceives that a Special Power is miraculously transmitted by ceremonial means, namely, by the imposition of hands.

Those who take this which may be called the Apostolic view, necessarily exalt the Church, which to them is God's vicegerent upon earth; for its priests possess a power denied not only to laymen but to ministers of all other denominations, who in this essential respect are and must be regarded as laymen. It is true that the branches of the Catholic and Apostolic Church do not agree among themselves entirely as to the authentic channels of this mysterious influence. To the Roman, the Anglican Catholic is a layman, even though he be a prelate.[1] To the Anglican, the

[1] The question of the recognition or non-recognition of Anglican Or-

President of the Wesleyan Conference, or the Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod, may be in friendship a brother, and in good works a helper, but he has no claim to recognition as a priest: nor, indeed, does he prefer such a claim, because he does not belong to the type which appreciates the idea of Divine influence ceremonially conveyed from one human being to another.

But the distinction of type is not confined to the clergy: it runs through the laity likewise. Those who believe in the special and exclusive character of ecclesiastical priesthood are bound to venerate the Officers invested with those powers, and to submit to their teaching and influence, irrespective of their personality; for they can not only help and strengthen you by administration of the Sacraments: they actually have the power of forgiving your sins,—or, still more remarkable, of preventing the forgiveness of your sins, if they be so minded.

Baptismal regeneration is only one of the things which can be effected through their agency, but that too is a power of great magnitude, and if your child is to be eternally lost without their aid their aid must be sought; for in this ceremony he is made, according to the Catechism—not recognised only and admitted into the Church as such, but actually made—a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.[1]

ders is sometimes said to have been decided like a move in a game or in party politics—after private discussion as to which course was best calculated to benefit one side and to damage the other. The subject appears to be eminently fitted for such treatment.

[1] The preposition "in" is used in the Catechism, but "by" occurs in

True, they must be regarded only as instruments and vehicles of Divine mercy; but in so far as Divine mercy is felt to be a vital thing, the channels by which it is dispensed become of overwhelming interest; and if they, as Officers of a corporate and divinely ordained Church, really have in any sense a monopoly of the Holy Spirit, their unfolding of the Bible may be the only explication religiously permissible.

It is only those who have no belief in the reality of priestly powers of this kind—people to whom such powers seem like superstition, who prefer to worry out truth for themselves, and who pray directly to the Fountain of Infinite Wisdom to keep them from being deceived and to lead them into the way of truth —it is only these who can afford to dispense with, or in some cases even to resent, the good offices of the Catholic Church, whether in its Greek or Roman or Anglican branches.

If now we bethink ourselves what is it that constitutes the essential difference of type, I think we shall find that we must admit as the most distinctive feature of the Prayer Book, from the denominational and ultra-protestant point of view, not the ordinary popular services of Matins and Evensong, nor the still more beautiful form for Holy Communion, but the regulation for the Ordering of Priests. The greater part of that service may be passed as undenominational, save that naturally it seems intended expressly to sever the Anglican from the Roman

one form of the baptismal service: "Seeing now . . . that this child is by baptism regenerate."

priesthood, but the official sentence which accompanies the laying on of hands is distinctly and purposely hierarchical. Those who accept that are Churchmen; those who rejoice at it are high-Churchmen. All other details sink into insignificance before this Episcopal pronouncement:

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

This has been said ceremonially to every Anglican parish priest in the British Isles, some of whom doubtless believe that a mysterious efficacy has descended upon them, and that they possess the awful power thus conferred.

That being so, it should be, and probably is, clear to any contending and opposing party that priests so consecrated, and animated by such beliefs, cannot possibly consent to open their schools to dissenters: it would be more reasonable for doctors to open the hospitals to quacks. They are bound to insist on their high prerogative, and to teach children to come to them for the sacramental and other inspired influences which they can bestow on the penitent and the faithful, or be false to their trust.[1] And conversely,

[1] "Experience has shown the inefficacy of the mere injunctions of Church order, however scripturally enforced, in restraining from schism the awakened and anxious sinner; who goes to a dissenting preacher 'because (as he expresses it) he gets good from him': and though he does not stand excused in God's sight for yielding to the temptation, surely the ministers of the Church are not blameless if, by keeping back

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those who stoutly deny and conscientiously resent the idea of any such special privileges—who quote in opposition, for instance, 1 Cor. i. 17—may feel bound to express their views also, and may earnestly seek to prevent their children from coming under avowedly sacerdotal influence. The text or texts in the Bible on which an absolution dogma is based must be held responsible for a good deal of the perennial conflict between Church and Dissent. It may be possible for Biblical critics to say that John xx. 21–23 is a later insertion, like Matt. xvi. 19 and the end of Mark; but assuming the most orthodox possible view, and taking the record of the words about the forgiveness and the retention of sins as exact, it is open even to devout Bibliolators to argue against the modern use of such a formula, somewhat as follows: "By whom," they might ask, "were these words spoken to the disciples? Not by Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh, but by the risen Lord just before His Ascension and Session at the right hand of God. That which He could say then, to those whom He was leaving comfortless for the ten days between His departure and the feast of Pentecost, is now said by every bishop of the Church. But it does not follow that what could be said once, under exceptional circumstances, is suitable

the more gracious and consoling truths provided for the little ones of Christ, they indirectly lead him into it. Had he been taught as a child, that the Sacraments, not preaching, are the sources of Divine Grace; that the Apostolical ministry had a virtue in it which went out over the whole Church, when sought by the prayer of faith; that fellowship with it was a gift and privilege, as well as a duty, we could not have had so many wanderers from our fold, nor so many cold hearts within it" (Advt. to *Tracts for the Times*, 1834).

for indefinite repetition." Thus might opponents contend, and their contention might have to be admitted as true, and the modern use of the formula virtually explained away, save by a few extremists who still adhere to its literal interpretation.

Hence there is a well-marked cause of difference, and justification of a militant attitude. How then can it be hoped to effect formal reconciliation of the two religious types? At first sight, only in one of two ways: either by general admission of truth in a sacerdotal of this kind; or, on the other hand, by the equally improbable admission of the imaginary character of any sort of basis for such a claim—a perception that, though it has survived the shocks of time, and come down the centuries to our own day, it is yet a human imagination, and essentially false.

Taken in its literal and bald signification, the ordination sentence above quoted would be intolerable to a low or to a broad Churchman; consequently he must be able to interpret it otherwise. He would doubtless claim that it signifies the right to declare the judgment of the Christian conscience, or at any rate of the Christian Church, as to details of right and wrong: to formulate, in fact, the judgments of the Holy Spirit, under whose guidance he is henceforth to act. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* It is not, however, a barren formula removed from practice: it enters into the pastoral work of the priest, and is applied to sick persons in the following form:

"By his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the name," etc.

Even this, however though challenged by John Henry Newman, and regarded by him as inadmissible save under the Roman ægis, is doubtless capable of refined interpretation. And so it is with all the formularies—else it were impossible for great and good men, to whom the natural sense of some of them must be repugnant to hold office in the Church to-day. Let it be admitted, once for all, that saving and minimising interpretations are known and utilised by many of those inside the pale; and I shall assume, without question now, that they are justified in these interpretations under the circumstances. But those outside the pale, and those who are hesitating to enter it, are liable to take these formulæ more nearly at their face-value, and to mistrust ingenuity of interpretation. Wherefore—and that is my point—such formulæ act as obstacles, as weapons of exclusion, and as causes of dissension and bitterness; even among those who in all essentials agree. And they have another function, perhaps equally harmful: they encourage extreme sacerdotal pretensions in a few exceptionally constituted persons, who, whatever may be their saintly character, are in disaccord with the religious ideals of the nation. So much so, indeed, that they might find their proper place in another and a foreign communion.

Seeing, therefore, that such formulæ may do harm, it is open to question whether they do a compensating amount of good. Words, such as those above quoted, either mean something definite, or they do not. If they confer any real power, if they give real strength

to the Church, they must be retained; but if they serve no useful purpose, if they signify only what is naturally to be expected without them—namely, the power of appreciating and fostering the good, of detecting and condemning the bad, which is possessed by every decent man—if they are only a difficulty to be boggled at and explained away, they constitute a weakness, not a strength, and it may be well to have them changed.

In any case it is quite absurd for either side in the controversy—the ancient controversy between Catholic and Protestant, between Priest and Presbyter, between High Anglican and Free Churchman, between upholders of public ritual and insisters on private conscience, between the objective and the subjective types of worshippers, between those who lay stress on the Brotherhood and those who emphasise the individual life—it is futile for either side to pretend that the other side is wicked and schismatic and alienated from God. So perhaps there is a third course—what some think the fatal course of compromise—in which the permanent vitality of the two types of religious humanity is recognised, and something of absolute truth admitted to be visible from both points of view. In which case it might not be too much to hope that the two groups, no longer hostile, could ultimately agree to live together in harmony, as two wings of an enlarged National Church; without need for anyone to abandon the phase of truth, or the form of worship which especially appeals to his disposition and theological understanding. At present there are Non-

conformists, obedient to private judgment and disobedient to authority, at both ends of the Church of England:—those who left it when what they considered too much superstition was enforced; and those who, without leaving it, feel conscientiously impelled to ignore both lay jurisdiction and episcopal "admonition" when too little superstition is ordered;—meaning by "superstition," in this connexion, the outcome in practice of over-belief.

I do not venture to suggest inclusion in a National Church of those who take a non-national view of their civil obligations. No question of union or of adaptation can be entertained by those who regard a foreign Potentate and foreign Conclave as supreme authority and fount of inspiration: nothing short of submission and conversion would be acceptable to them. Nor is it possible for them to join a merely national Church, however nearly their creed may approach one section of it on the purely religious side: a certain canon—which I presume is still in force—to wit, that subjects of a temporal ruler disapproved by the Church may be relieved of their allegiance, and that the promulgation of unacceptable doctrine is to be suppressed with a high hand—constitutes a sufficient obstacle.[1] It is far from desirable that any ecclesias-

[1] The Lateran Council decree, above referred to, part of the Roman Canon Law, is guarded against in the English Church by the oath of the King's sovereignty administered to deacons, which runs as follows:—"I *A. B.* do swear, that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable Doctrine and Position, That Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any Authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their Subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do declare, that no foreign Prince, Person,

tical gauntlet which investigators of truth may have to run should in the smallest degree be backed up by the power of the State. But no such difficulty arises when contemplating a reincorporation of the Free Churches which have grown up and divaricated in consequence of a long spell of intolerant bigotry ending in an act of disruption in and about the year 1662. Many of them could easily rejoin one pole of a National Church if it sought to attract them; at any rate they need not be repelled by enforced uniformity in detail, nor by any kind of secular legislation. The Legislature conspicuously shrinks from interference with liberty of conscience and must recognise that it made mistakes in the past whenever it consented to be coaxed or coerced into narrowness and brutality in matters of faith. It would surely welcome a movement in favor of breadth and reintegration, if it were mooted by those most concerned.

There is the more hope for some such solution, inasmuch as none but a bigot could claim to grasp in

Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath, or ought to have, any Jurisdiction, Power, Superiority, Pre-eminence, or Authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within this Realm. *So help me God.*"

This is the wording of the decree: "Let the secular powers, whatever offices they may exercise . . . exterminate from the territories under their jurisdiction heretics of all kinds marked out by the Church. . . . But if any temporal ruler, being required and admonished by the Church, shall neglect to purge his land from this heretical filth, let him be bound in the chain of excommunication by the metropolitan and other bishops of the province. And if he shall disdain to make satisfaction within a year, let this be signified to the Supreme Pontiff, that he may declare the vassals of that ruler henceforth released from their allegiance, and may offer the land to occupation by Catholics, who, having exterminated the heretics, may possess it in peace and preserve it steadfast in the Faith."

his own person the whole truth concerning a subject of infinite magnitude, or could suppose that the precise form of worship most suited to himself must necessarily be dominant throughout the cosmos. Wherefore it might be recognised, by reasonable persons on either side, that the manifest enthusiasm and religious fervour of those from whom they differ are roused, not by falsehood and error, but by real portions, even though they be fragmentary portions, of Divine truth which have hitherto escaped their own ken, or for which their own emotional and æsthetic nature happens to be unfitted.

The possibility of such a *concordat* may at first sight seem remote, but it is worth more than momentary consideration, and it is possible to detect more reasonableness embedded in the proposal than appears on the surface.

First of all, then, let us ask is it true that any worshipper, however spiritually minded, can dispense altogether with material facts as an aid to the expression and realisation of spiritual truth, and as an external stimulus to the attitude of worship? Can the spiritual and the material, in fact, be entirely and utterly discriminated and separated? I will not ask whether such separation is or is not desirable; I will not point out how much loss would be sustained if it were practicable—how fatal to half of nature such an achievement would immediately be; but I will simply ask, is it ever done, as a fact? I believe that a little consideration will show that it is never really accom-

plished, and that some material agent is active even in the most refined and spiritual perceptions. It will at least be admitted that in the case of some religiously minded persons the sights and sounds of nature awaken a sense of Divine presence. In others the same feelings are aroused by hearing of some human action, or by meeting other human beings with whom they are in sympathy. Some men are carried Godward by beauty, others by truth, others by goodness; and some even by the commonplace actions of daily life. A remarkable face, casually encountered, or a word even from a stranger, has been known occasionally to call up thoughts akin to worship, even in the most unritualistic follower of George Fox.

> "Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
> As old and new at once as nature's self,
> To rap and knock and enter in our soul."

If there be any truth in the suggestion—and it is a question which must be answered by each for himself, it can hardly be put in a form that will equally apply to every individual—then an essential feature of the sacramental efficacy of material or external things, when spiritually regarded and transfigured in the light of a dominating faith, is admitted: for material means whereby the soul can be elevated, and brought into conscious relation with Deity, are essentially of the nature of sacraments.

"To attempt to grasp the infinite by reason," says Plotinus, "is futile; it can only be known in immedi-

ate presence. The faculty by which the mind divests itself of its personality is *Ecstasy*. In ecstasy the soul becomes loosed from its material prison, separated from individual consciousness, and becomes absorbed in the Infinite Intelligence from which it emanated." This condition of inspiration, direct intuition, or enthusiasm,—some approach to what is meant by "seeing God,"—is but transitory, and may be rare, but it can be induced by a great variety of instrument. A few attain it during the contemplation of law and order enshrined in a mathematical expression, or in some comprehensive philosophic formula; but to many the transfiguring and revealing experience is heralded by the song of birds, by sunshine upon grass, by the wind in tree-tops, or by the wild solitude of mountains. To one the vision comes during the music of an orchestra or the sight of a great work of art; to another, the atmosphere of an empty cathedral is full of it; while to another, again, the same cathedral must contain lights and incense in order effectively to act as a medium. To many the acts of common worship are an invaluable aid; while others find their fullest help towards realising the Divine presence in the consecrated materials of a purposely arranged and specially organised Sacrament.

The means of grace last mentioned—being consciously directed to a desired end—must be considered as especially forcible and effective; at any rate for those who are constituted in such a way as to appreciate accessories and aids of this kind. But it is not to be denied that, in spite of good intention, these eccle-

siastical forms and ceremonies strike another type of religious disposition as so humanly ingenious and specifically organised as to repel rather than attract divine thoughts; which with these people arise in more spontaneous fashion, amid the simplicity of almost unassisted worship in plain buildings, or among the solitudes of unconsecrated nature.

It must be admitted however,—and I presume that Nonconformists would be the last to deny it,—that there is always a danger lest, if human effort and organisation be altogether discarded, as they sometimes are by religiously minded secularists, the opportunities for spontaneous excitation of religious thoughts may seldom or never occur; and so gradually the power of entertaining lofty ideas may become atrophied by lack of use. Moreover, those who depend entirely on the capacities of their own unaided individual soul may find, in times of stress, a sad emptiness and dearth of comfort there. That is at once the weakness and strength of an emphatically spiritual religion: it makes a severe demand on the worshippers' own powers and faculties. This constitutes a weakness,—for there come times when the spirit is so harassed by the troubles and trials of existence that even the stoutest cannot stand the strain; but it constitutes also a strength,—inasmuch as it braces and exercises and develops the fibres of the character.

There will also be those who are impressed with, not so much the right as the duty of private judgment; and on the other hand there will always be those who willingly submit to authority. In the same way we

must recognise a constitutional difference, a difference of temperament, a difference of response to diverse appeals. But the difference is only dependent on "accident" or appropriateness of vehicle: it is not a difference of really fundamental character; and though it is natural to prefer one form of material accessory to another, it is not human, at least it is not religious, to despise and reject them all.

It is perhaps not known to everybody that the general nature of a sacrament is recognised by the English Church—very likely by the Roman Church too,—for it is definitely laid down in the "Homilies" that in a certain sense there may be many sacraments:

"Therefore neither it, nor any other sacrament else, be such sacraments as Baptism and Communion are; but in a general acception the name of a sacrament may be attributed to anything whereby an holy thing is signified" (*Homily on Common Prayer and Sacraments*).

Wherefore, opponents may ask, why not then carry out this doctrine into practice? why urge the importance of two, or of seven?

One orthodox answer is that the two are "necessary to salvation,"—a doctrine corresponding with the over-literal misreading of a text, and not really believed any more than the corresponding "Athanasian" clauses are believed. But a better answer, and indeed the answer of Christendom generally with few exceptions, is that the two were in a special sense authorised and enjoined by Christ; so in order to estimate their crucial character it is instructive to con-

sider how these specially Christian sacraments arose. It is easy to add an element of mysticism to the bare facts, and those who make this addition may claim it as a sign of spiritual growth; but the addition should be voluntary, it cannot wisely be imposed by legislation. The bare facts themselves may be legitimately and inoffensively regarded somewhat thus:

Jesus found the old baptismal act of ceremonial washing revived and used as a sign of repentance by his great precursor,—either as a symbolic cleansing, or else as a symbolic burying to sin and new birth to righteousness (for both significations can be attached to the rite of immersion); instinctively he recognised the advantage of associating divine thoughts with so common an act as bathing or washing, and, just as he utilised any common event for doctrinal purposes, so he utilised this act, by submitting himself to it: thereby canonising it among Christians for all time. But then he did the same thing virtually with the sower and the seed, with a marriage feast, with fisherman's nets, with carpenters' tools, and a multitude of common incidents of life; though in these the Church, perhaps fortunately, has been slower to follow him to the full extent. I say fortunately, because it is so apt to let its enthusiasm carry it unwisely far: in the case of baptism it has at certain periods of its history, at any rate in some of its branches, gone too far, and converted a ceremony of admission into a miraculous rite of saving efficacy.

In another case also it has not only followed, but has emphatically gone beyond and exceeded, its in-

structions, to what many think a lamentable extent; at times even daring to inflict torture and death on those who could not travel with it along this humanly extended road. For the common act of eating and drinking was among those conspicuously sanctified by Christ; on that pathetic occasion when, after long discourse on his approaching fate, and much figurative speech concerning the necessity for complete union with himself, he took up the bread and the wine, no doubt blessing them after the still extant Jewish fashion, and then—perhaps half thinking of ancient pagan rites, wherein exuberant gentile worshippers had spoken of eating the flesh of a god, and certainly remembering the sacrifices of flesh and blood familiar in their own scriptures and in the forthcoming passover—added, in a moment of enthusiasm fraught with strange destiny for the future Church, "This is my flesh and this is my blood. Bless it, and take it, and remember me whenever henceforth ye feed together." As for himself, this was his last food and his last drink—a long spasm of torture and hunger and thirst was all that lay before him on earth—"I shall taste no more of the fruit of the vine till I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of my Father."

Regarded simply and naturally, it is a gracious domestic ceremony; akin to the toast of good fellowship, but with the sadness of pain and parting commingled. It was surely intended as an act of union and brotherhood, not as a testing instrument or dividing engine. The sharing of one loaf is recognised by St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 17) as a symbol of the oneness

of the many in the Christian body—a true *communion.*

Looked at from the point of view of subsequent history, and what human organisation has made of it, even devout worshippers must admit that superstition has been prone to enter, and that its ecclesiastical developments have been at times painful beyond description.

Yet that should not prevent those who prefer not to partake of ecclesiastically administered sacrament from recognising that to others it constitutes the very bread of life, and that to worshippers of this character the meaning and efficacy of the symbols are enhanced beyond measure by ceremonial observance and ritual.

What has been said about sacraments can be interpreted as applying to priesthood also. A priest is a vehicle of the Holy Ghost, an interpreter of divine things, and a helper towards higher life. Priesthood is a reality; but, if my interpretation of it be correct, it cannot be a professional monopoly. Like genius, it evades definition; but is it not likely to be coercible and transmissible by ceremonial means. Surely it must be true that the Spirit moveth where it listeth, and is not amenable to clerical control.

Every man, woman, or child who has the power of elevating the thought of another human being, everyone who is chosen to act as a channel of the Divine Spirit, is for the time a priest. It may be well to set aside and train and guard a band of persons who feel

specially called to this high office; in the hope that by discipline and custom their powers of true priesthood and sainthood may increase. It is desirable that the Church should set store by and guard its priests, just as it guards its sacraments, from pollution and contamination with the things of the outer world. Precautionary and reverential arrangements are humanly intelligible and more or less necessary, but they are not essential; they are matters of ecclesiastical polity, not of divine ordinance.

The Church recognises, indeed, that every man is in some small sense a priest in his own household, and admits that in times of emergency he may act as such, up to the point of administering the minor sacrament of Baptism, provided he employs the right material and the authorised form of words; but, save for this charitable exception, it jealously guards its own rites and privileges, and denies the real apostolic authority to all save those whom it has itself ordained: thereby and to that extent appearing to claim a monopoly of the Holy Spirit, which, in the judgment of many, it cannot rigorously sustain, except in so far as it may be justified by public convenience and usage.

So long as specific and special priesthood is recognised as possessed only in a representative capacity, it can do no harm. Harm begins when an exclusive character is claimed for it. The true official priest is representative or typical of the potential priesthood of all religious humanity, a symbol of the close connection and affectionate intercourse between God and

man: somewhat as Christ was essentially the son of man and son of God, to the exclusion of none of his brethren.

In this form the office is not to be stigmatised as sacerdotal—it is only to be so stigmatised when it claims to be exclusive, when it seeks to be a monopoly of the grace of God.

So also the Eucharist may legitimately be held to represent or typify a Divine Presence, provided it is likewise taught that all nature is the living garment of God, and that space and time are expressions of His thoughts. It is not a claim for the Divine presence, but a claim for the Divine absence—anywhere—that should be resisted.

There is no need for nonconformist feeling in these matters, except in details of administration which may well be made more elastic. Priesthood and sacraments are realities; forms and orderly ceremonies are necessary for collective human worship: it is their exaggeration and misunderstanding that is to be deprecated, not the things themselves. Those who think they are worshipping in spirit only, are really using forms and material aids, though the forms may be of a simple character. An attitude of body, an enforced silence, a gathering together into an accustomed building, the reading of a book, the singing of a hymn—all these are physical and material aids to spiritual growth, and are therefore essentially sacramental. It is but a question of degree; and those who cannot utilise forms of so simple a character are justified in

seeking to invent and enjoy ceremonies of a more elaborate kind.

So also, everyone privileged to act as a minister of God, a true vehicle of the Holy Spirit, is for the time being a priest by right divine. It is only because under present conditions such influence is comparatively rare, that we have to betake ourselves to a professional priesthood. It is a necessity: it is not an ideal. The ideal held out by Christ himself was a high one. "Be ye perfect," he said. Be a Christ, he might have said: be thyself a messenger and revealer of divine truth, up to the measure of thy capacity. "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." He did not say these things to the priest and orthodox worshippers of his own day—to them he said quite other things:—these high injunctions he laid upon a body of trained and chosen peasants who had loved and followed him, and thus ordained them with genuine priesthood.

And to all the animate and inanimate creatures, of earth and air and sea, he gave a message too. On all of them he conferred sacramental efficacy—nothing is unholy or unclean—everything can join in the song of joy and worship that rises from all healthy nature. By his teaching the whole world of matter is transfigured and glorified before our eyes; it is suffused with immanent Deity, and has become, for those with eyes to see, a mirror of the Almighty.

Now all this, which to most of us is so clear now,

was not equally clear to the generality of folk in the times gone by. Saints here and there seized the truth, no doubt, and tried to express it in language fitted to their time; but from the great mass of the people it was hidden. Persons in high office—Archbishop Cranmer and others—put together our liturgy, during a moderately exalted period of English history, utilising many beautiful petitions and formularies, and showing great genius for the work; but it is not to be supposed that they were gifted with infallibility, so that they grasped the truth completely and expressed it for all time. Nor was the Act of Parliament which crystallised and congealed the Prayer Book an inspired document.[1] Admitting that historic forms make a special appeal to the emotions, revision of the Prayer Book on the intellectual side ought to be and is necessary, especially after a century of great intellectual achievement. The question arises whether the time is not ripe for revision now.

Loth as I am to meddle with professional and ecclesiastical matters, the present juncture in the history of the English Church and nation seems to me sufficiently important to compel those who recognise the pressing need for social reform, and the great power and influence for good which a truly efficient Church would possess, to urge a reconsideration of the implicit tests and requirements imposed on candidates

[1] Even Newman, in a tract urging no concession or tittle of alteration, says: "I confess that there are few parts of the Service that I could not disturb myself about and feel fastidious at, if I allowed my mind in this abuse of reason."

for Holy Orders in the Church of England at various stages in their career.—The fact that it is a National Church removes the charge of impertinence from the utterance of a layman on such matters. The spirit of the following sentences, taken from "His Majesty's Declaration" printed in every Anglican Prayer Book, is not attractive to an age which has imbibed the idea of evolution and some conception of the faithful investigation of truth:

. . . "the settled Continuance of the Doctrine and Disciple of the Church of *England* now established; from which We will not endure any varying or departing in the least Degree. . . . We will, that all further curious search be laid aside. . . . And that no man hereafter shall either print, or preach, to draw the Article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof: and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.

"That if any publick Reader in either of Our Universities, or any Head or Master of a College, or any other person respectively in either of them, shall affix any new sense to any Article, or shall publickly read, determine, or hold any publick Disputation, or suffer any such to be held either way, in either the Universities or Colleges respectively; or if any Divine in the Universities shall preach or print any thing either way, other than is already established in Convocation with Our Royal Assent; he, or they, the Offenders, shall be liable to Our displeasure, and the

Church's censure in our Commission Ecclesiastical, as well as any other: And We will see there shall be due Execution upon them."

If the Church excludes, and to some extent even if it only threatens to exclude, from its ministry all young men who are unable to accept a system of archaic formulæ as valid, with whatever saving clauses and subterfuges it dilutes in practice its theoretical requirements, it may be creating for itself an "unnatural selection," so to speak, a survival or selection of the weakest. And if it does so, then, like any other organism in the same case, it must in the long run infallibly degenerate.

I believe that its leaders, its real leaders, admit that it could with advantage amend its procedure in several particulars; especially that it could diminish the amount of mechanical uniformity and allow some elasticity in the use of a liturgy which, though fragrant with historical aroma, has now become to many people monotonous and barren. But the chief wish of those who love the idea of a National Church is that it would so modify its entrance barriers, and so simplify its formularies, as to draw to itself more young men of character, intellect, and breadth of view.

Only so can it once more become, what it ought to be and is not, a truly comprehensive National Church, —one flock under one Shepherd,—elevating and sanctifying the State by connexion with it; instead of, what many now consider it, an unholy alliance of mingled constraint and privilege,—hampered in its

own actions by the rigidity of its connexion with Parliament, and yet drawing thence so much worldly dignity and social independence as to be regarded with suspicion by an able and energetic portion of a religiously minded nation, whose ministers are excluded from co-operation in the National ceremonies and from official recognition by the State, and who consequently conduct their ministrations at a perceptible disadvantage: a disadvantage which to Newman seemed so serious that he wrote, in 1833: "We know how miserable is the condition of religious bodies not supported by the State."

The difficulties surrounding reform are considerable, though it is possible to exaggerate them; but sooner or later it will be undertaken; and the exclusiveness of State connexion will be broken down, either by the method of disestablishment, or by that of greater comprehensiveness and union. Would that a movement might be made towards union! Not union in every minor doctrine, nor in every detail of practice, but unison of effort, coupled with clear practical perception of the real needs of the time. To this end artificial boundaries must be broken down, and the domain covered by the National Church must be broadened till it includes all aspiring workers who are casting out devils in the one Name.

CHAPTER VI

A REFORMED CHURCH AS AN ENGINE OF PROGRESS

"Religion was once the pillar of fire which went before the human race in its great march through history, showing it the way. Now it is fast assuming the rôle of the ambulance which follows in the rear and picks up the exhausted and wounded. This, too, is a great work, but it is not sufficient. And when religion has disburdened herself of all her dead values, she will once more, in intimate association with ethics, rise to be a power which leads men forward."—HÖFFDING.

IN the preceding chapter I have urged that the re-creation and continuance of a truly National Church must involve a great simplification of Church enactments, so as to leave fair freedom of interpretation concerning the meaning of Christian ceremonies; and that the way to reform lies through a movement of breadth and incorporation, which should consolidate the now prevalent desire for greater tolerance and union.

In the belief that the subject is of great importance, and that the time is nearly ripe for reform, I now wish to proceed further in the same direction, and to urge that, putting less trust in oaths and formularies, we should cease from attempting to bind by anticipation revolting and unwilling spirits, and show more faith in living humanity—especially in the kind of humanity which feels called to work in the Chris-

tian vineyard. There need be no forced alteration of procedure in religious services, but there should be large avoidance of compulsory uniformity. We must admit the existence of worshippers of different types, we must realise the need for growth and development, and must encourage loyalty to the spirit of truth—especially among those who co-operate in good works; in the assurance that, by those who do the works, all essential doctrine will be sufficiently accepted, without compulsion, in due time.

It may seem inappropriate, and in strict sense impertinent, for a student of science to feel strongly on such topics, but it is an inappropriateness not without precedent. The general welfare of humanity, and the stability of advancing civilisation, are themes of interest to all, whatever our special studies may be; and before now a prophet of Art has felt constrained to urge that artistic development must be stunted, and the highest art impossible, until social conditions are improved. So also some writers and speakers, with the ear of the populace, condemn a peaceful absorption in scientific pursuits, amid the surrounding mass of poverty and misery, as a mark of selfishness and hard-heartedness. What is the good of abstruse scientific theories, they say, when what people need is wholesome food and warmth and decent homes! And the thoughts of many a would-be student are perturbed in the same way. These good and sympathetic people vicariously feel the pressure of life so keenly that no occupation save relieving the pain seems worth while. Their lives and sympathies are so absorbed

and exhausted in the tormenting problems of a great city, under present conditions, that they grow to regard the multifarious interests of the world through the perspective of the victim on the rack, to whom but one thing is needful.

But I lay no particular stress on a likelihood of injury to knowledge, through prevalent lack of sympathy with pure science and ignorance of its intrinsic value, nor on any other merely intellectual obstacle; that is not the sort of thing which paralyses activity and acts as a constant sore. If society were in a healthy condition, if the development and elevation of man had not to take a secondary and quite subordinate place to the development and accumulation of property, a few generations of better education could easily mend it on the intellectual side; but it is the greedy and essentially uncivilised condition of what prides itself as the most practical part of society, and the consequent deep-rooted and unadmitted canker eating into the bones of the social organism, that is disquieting and oppressive.

It is against all this that a National Church is or should be fighting. If these evils are to be uprooted, I cannot see how the uprooting can be done by a single reformer or prophet—a Carlyle, a Ruskin, or a Morris—here and there; they must be attacked by an organised army of workers and thinkers, imbued with the right spirit, informed as to the real facts, devoted to the cause of goodness, and trained for the detection of long-accustomed errors and for the development of human life.

An efficient contingent of such an army exists, or should exist, in the churches of every denomination. Here are men picked out, we must suppose, for their keen perception of right and wrong, for their enthusiasm and longing after higher life,—men who are subjected to special training for the work, and then sent as missionaries throughout the whole range of society, to preach Christ's Gospel and to bring the Kingdom of Heaven into realisation upon earth. Here should be a general staff of commanding power, if only it be in real touch with the people, if only it realises the extent and the quality of its mission, and is properly prepared to cope with it. But it must concentrate its weapons upon the enemy, and must not employ them in internecine warfare. An army whose officers dispute among themselves, whose horse and foot are in conflict, and whose artillery is trained upon its engineers, is not an efficient instrument of conquest.

Those who realise to some extent what a power for good a truly National Church might be, and how with comparative ease the earnest religious spirit of England could absorb and utilise the energies of such a Church—a truly Christian and truly comprehensive Church, with the best men attracted, not repelled, the present narrow mechanical uniformity superseded by breadth and liberality, with errors of past history discarded, mean jealousies extinguished, and differences composed—such persons may feel that the reform and strengthening of the Church is perhaps the best though not the most direct route towards elimination

of the wrongs and amelioration of the evils of our social state. At present many of the thinking workers are alienated from what they imagine is religion; and a cry for general secularisation is gaining ground. The State may be rightly urged to have nothing to do with controversial religion; but the elimination of religious disputes and the elimination of religion are not necessarily the same thing. The cessation of all recognition of religion itself by the State is certainly not a step in the right direction.

The cry for disestablishment is not loud just now; but it is liable to be raised at any time, so long as the present condition of special privilege continues. The cry is really a cry for more equality of treatment—for more national recognition all round. Only a few want to separate all religion from the State; though many might rejoice at freedom from so-called Erastian control. A section of Presbyterians north of the Tweed may feel conscientiously opposed to State-connexion of any kind, and some Nonconformists may imagine that they feel conscientious objection; but that is not the real bugbear in England; it is the limitation and narrowness of the connexion that is really objected to. Broaden the Church out till it is truly national, by removing the preposterous coercion in detail which is now nominally exercised,—and the grievance disappears. The National Church could then absorb the best activities of all denominations, and the nation would be strengthened on its highest side to an incalculable extent. Efforts at betterment of human conditions are precarious and difficult and

rather blind, so long as mutual hostility or suspicion persists among the branches of the Christian Church.

Either corporate action towards amelioration is impossible, or the Church, in the most comprehensive sense, should be the most powerful army for good in existence. Its ministers are like officers distributed throughout the country, with social prestige and the attentive ear of a large proportion of the more leisured and opulent classes; these Officers should be engaged, even more than at present, in training and enlarging and disciplining the forces of progress, ready for a re-birth of society.

Herein lies, I believe, the most vital reform of all; but it is not a reform that can be procured by direct aim; it must arrive spontaneously after attraction of the best and ablest men to the ministry. The nation should demand the Ministry of its best men—in the Church as well as in the Cabinet.

And the reform contemplated should be real and genuine; the Confession of sin repeated in ecclesiastical buildings should be no conventional and meaningless chant, nor should it be supposed to apply only to individual and personal sinfulness; it should above all, in collective worship, apply to collective sin,—to that sinfulness of society which Christ would denounce if he came again among us. The vigour of that denunciation would, I expect, eclipse anything now heard from pulpits; though it would, I believe, take a different and unexpected direction, and concern itself less with the weaknesses and follies and half-repented sins of humanity, than with the greed,

the selfishness, the sheer individualism and mammon-worship which excite but occasional reprobation; it would attack the heartless and contented acquiescence in conditions which debase the soul of a people and erect the extravagant luxury of a few on the grinding poverty of many.

In that sense an acknowledgment of fault is indeed urgently and constantly needed; but the feeling should be driven home and made real; confession should never be allowed to degenerate into an easy perfunctory form. The selfishness of society is the really burning sin of our time, and it is the more dangerous because so generally unrecognised. It has been unrecognised in the chancel as well as in the nave—it seems never to have been adequately recognised by an Established Church as a whole—and to this one cause such a Church is thought to owe much of its impotence; to this is due much of the mistrust of the Church by the people, who have found it in the past often against themselves, and siding with the rich and powerful;—an attitude singularly different from that of its Master. That inspired song the "Magnificat" struck the keynote of primitive Christianity.

Let us freely and heartily admit that a great internal effort is now being made to revive the early spirit in the Church—the spirit of brotherhood and social work. And yet there is room. The enthusiasm and exertion of some Anglican leaders are beyond praise, but their spirit has not yet permeated the whole mass. Wherever the right spirit exists the

people respond to it, as they did in A.D. 30. Christ's teachings frequently dealt with the subject of riches, even then, when vast accumulations were hardly feasible, save in a form accessible to the ravages of moth and rust; but with the invention of stocks and shares the possibilities of property have enlarged, and his denunciations now might be unexpectedly welcomed by some who do not profess and call themselves Christians. There are men—men of influence among the artisans—who openly scoff at what they call religion, who nevertheless plead "not guilty" for the down-trodden victims of pernicious surroundings; who emphasise the fact that we *are* our brothers' keepers; who really long for a fairer and wholesomer setting for the life of human beings, and who have been repelled from Christianity, not by the teachings of Christ himself, but by the confusions and errors of his nominal disciples. These men call out for the clergy to be "converted to Christianity." What do they mean? It were perhaps well for ministers of all denominations to consider what they mean.

Doubtless in so speaking they are to some extent making the mistake illustrated by the above-quoted objection to unharassed scientific work. For just as strenuous intellectual concentration needs eyes temporarily shut to the mass of avoidable misery and pain—pain caused by human stupidity and by almost inhuman selfishness, to which everyone must shut his eyes at times, or life were impossible—so the clergy must at times possess their souls in peace and comfort; they have to minister to believers and sinners

and saints, as well as to contend against hypocrites and pharisees and servants of Mammon. The Church cannot *only* struggle and fight, it must sometimes stretch out its hands towards the farther shore, unhindered by differences and controversies, and unburdened by the sense of social misery and degradation. Not all services need be mission services; every now and then saints may allow their souls to expand in mystic worship of the Supreme, and may aim at devout contemplation and ecstacy; on certain days their "Divine Service" may be limited to the ecclesiastical and esoteric kind which now all but monopolises that splendid name.

But that must not be the chief employment of their lives; not while present evils continue. The Church must be militant if it is to become triumphant; it must learn strategy, and must throw its forces in the right direction. Right belief is intensely important, but is slow of attainment, and for the present right action is more prominently called for. It is no time for vegetating and leaf-development: it is fruits that will be looked for. There must be far less of "Whosoever will be saved must thus *think*," and far more of "Whosoever will save others must thus *do*." God's in His heaven truly, but all is not right with the world. Books written to-day immerse us, and rightly immerse us, in a welter of poverty and misery. The bitter cry of the victims of competition, of the outcasts of civilisation, and of the children who are born to sin and wretchedness, when they are not born to death,—the cry of multitudes with hardly any chance

of decent happiness and no outlook upon the beauty of this world,—this cry must be ringing in the ears of God till He cannot hear the chants of the churches, however musically they may be intoned, however frequently they may be repeated, and however completely the Ornaments-rubic may be obeyed. The spirit of greed is abroad; its net has gathered human beings together in heaps, has removed them from the fields and hedgerows, and has forced them into crowded dens. With success this spirit is doing devil's work; it and its ally, smug self-satisfied stupidity, are the modern fiends; these are the Satans with which the Church should be fighting.

What we have to learn is that the will of God is to be done on earth; that the Kingdom of Heaven is to be a present kingdom, here and now, not relegated always to the future. Eternity is not something in the future, any more than it is something in the past: it extends into the future and it extends into the past —without limit both ways,—but *this* is eternity, this moment we are alive, and the message of Christ relates to *"is."* not to *"will be."* The present is the only opportunity for a deed. We are to realise the highest here. If not here in this condition, why anywhere in any condition? For wherever we are will always be "here," and the time will always be "now." As soon as God's will is done on earth as it is done in heaven, a great part of the distinction between the two states of existence is abolished. That diminution of distinction is what the terrestrial Church has to strive to accomplish; that is the ultimate object of its in-

spiration and its labour: the ideal is to be made real, the world is to be transfigured and transformed. The task of the priest is the reconciliation, in our consciousness, of self, the world, and God.

It is with a knowledge of a mass of feeling and effort, some of it at present soured and hostile towards what it used to hear preached from pulpits of nearly every kind, but genuine in its aims and its love for humanity, that—using the word "Church" in the broadest sense, as the combined and corporate society of good men in action,—men whose lives and energies are devoted to the highest aims, in the spirit of real and effective and universal Christianity—I urge that if the nation is to be regenerated, it must be regenerated through the agency of The Church. There must be a union of effort among all who are casting out devils in the one Name.

But how great a change is needed! Contrasting the work that is to be done with the means adopted in too many cases for avoiding the doing of it, a prophet would be justified in exclaiming to the churches, and to the Church of this country, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life!"

Divine Service

The popular notion of Divine Service makes it consist of a multiplicity of so-called "services," which are too often no service at all, but recreation or sensuous enjoyment to those engaged in them;—a kind of service perhaps as unacceptable to the Deity, under

existing circumstances, as those other religious ceremonies inveighed against by the first Isaiah, in a period of less opportunity and responsibility than the present, when, as now, it could be said of a large part of society, "every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards . . ." and the cry of the oppressed is not heard even at the temple altars:

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices . . . who hath required this at your hands. . . . Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me. . . . Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. . . . When ye make many prayers I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek justice, set right the oppressor, relieve the oppressed."

The Church was not founded by temple services, nor will it grow in that way. An exceptional Forty Days, for the strengthening of the soul, and invigoration or insurance of its dominion over the body, must be wholesome and right; and other times of seclusion, as means to ends, are more than justified; but it is as means to an end that they should be regarded,—and the end is nothing less than the reform of social abuses, and the rescue of humanity from the damning conditions of hopeless and degrading squalor.

The kind of society which allows its children to be befouled and degraded and brought up in an atmosphere of crime, is the kind of society that should be dealt with by the aid of a millstone and a rope. If it uses its fresh human material as manure, it may flourish in a rank way, it may shoot up a coarse and luxuriant growth, it may yield a crop of millionaires; but

some kinds of fruit are too expensive for rational cultivation, some are not altogether wholesome: there are trees which must be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Religious bodies may pride themselves on the soundness and orthodoxy of their beliefs; but "he that doeth righteousness is righteous"; and supposed good beliefs are no compensation for bad results, either in society or in an individual. To speak strictly, such results are inconsistent with healthy beliefs—"do well will follow thought" if the thought be of the right kind; and there is high authority for the uselessness of merely crying Lord, Lord! It is deeds far more than creeds that are wanted now; or rather, it is creeds interpreted and acted out in deeds. We have to *discover,* but we have also to *realise.* We do not want matter without form, any more than we want form without matter. An idea must be incarnated before it is effective. That is how Christianity was founded, when the Logos was made flesh,

> "And so the Word had breath and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds
> More strong than all poetic thought."

Nothing less than a re-incarnation of the Logos will reinvigorate the faith of Christendom and carry forward the salvation of mankind. That is the meaning of the Second Advent. It is in our power to make ready the way; that is what our enlightenment and education and privileges are for. Man, though a little lower than the angels, is a messenger and serv-

ant of God just as truly, and his high mission is manifest. We as a nation have gone already into the ends of the earth; let us see to it that we understand and carry out rightly our great commission, in no narrow and iconoclastic spirit; remembering that, unless we set things right at home, our teaching will be ineffective, and sarcasm will be the emotion excited by our example. The second incarnation will be in the hearts of all men—a reign of brotherhood and love for which the heralds are already preparing their songs. Already there are "signs of his coming and sounds of his feet"; and upon our terrestrial activity the date of this Advent depends.

CHAPTER VII

SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS REFORM

IF I were challenged to say wherein I think that an improvement might be made in the regulations and arrangements for a National Christian Church under present conditions, I should emphasise three things:

First, more spontaneity and less monotony in Church service of all kinds, and the abandonment of mechanical uniformity in worship.

Second, more liberal education for Ministers; and the broadening and simplification of tests, so as to exclude as few good men as possible.

Third, and consequent upon these two, clear-sighted recognition of the signs of the times, study and enlightened encouragement of true beneficence, and stalwart opposition to all abuses of power.

I hesitate to enter into detail concerning these things, and yet I feel impelled to make the attempt; so, if I proceed, I will do so straightforwardly and without expressed apology.

Rubrics

First, concerning regulations for the services of the Church. Here I plead not for legislation, but for the

absence of legislation—for the removal of the close and definite legislation which exists now.

Permissively the Prayer Book can remain unchanged, with merely a substitution of "may" for "shall," and with the occasional iteration of words stating that for many centuries such and such was the practice of the Church,—thereby indicating a respect for historic continuity; but all sentences laying down a prescribed procedure, not as advisable only, but as compulsory—so that any the least variation from it becomes an illegality to be proceeded against in law courts—should surely be cancelled.

Within the Church itself some rules can be laid down, as from time to time may be thought wise by the several branches, but they will not be burdensome upon the conscience. In the Episcopal branch the Bishops will naturally have paternal authority, which doubtless they will exercise with moderation and wisdom; in the Presbyterian branch the Presbytery will have appropriate authority; in the Congregational branch, it is to be presumed, the Council; and so on. Details of practice and use of formularies would thus be decided on by eligible and sometimes competent bodies, who can readily modify them from time to time, and can leave what elasticity they think wise; and Parliament would be relieved of a burdensome and archaic responsibility.

The Prayer Book, considered as a legal document, was drawn upon the assumption that any freedom or elasticity or spontaneity in conducting a service was sure to be misused—not through malice and wicked-

ness, but through ignorance and stupidity. It is, in fact, founded on mistrust of intellectual or spiritual competence,—mistrust which tends to justify itself by reaction of the mechanical system itself upon those constantly subjected to its constricting influence. It is also based on the idea that religious feeling is a proper subject for legislation, and that it is possible to coerce men's beliefs, to govern their inclinations and control their consciences, by a system of rigid rubics and regulations; whereas it is notorious, and almost proverbial, that if the will to break law is active, the most carefully drafted clauses have extremely little binding force. For their interpretation depends in no sort on the intention of those who framed or of those who authorised them; their interpretation can be garbled to suit an emergency, or can be adapted to a changed system of opinions.

For instance, the Thirty-Nine Articles, agreed upon by Convocation in 1562 "for the avoiding of diversities of opinions," were for the most part drawn up by Protestants as a bulwark against the Church of Rome—a defence against any approach to the doctrines of that Church in certain well-known and famous controversies:—such as, Scripture not the Rule of faith; Faith not the sole Instrument of Justification; Infallibility of General Councils; Purgatory, Pardons, Relics, Invocation of Saints; five additional Sacraments; Transubstantiation; the sacrifices of the Mass. But Cardinal Newman, while still a minister of the Church of England, was able to show, in his

famous Tract 90, that the wording of the Articles, when taken in conjunction with the similiarly Protestant "Homilies," did not, as a matter of fact, exclude the interpretation regarded as baneful by those who formulated them; in fact, that the Articles lent themselves to Roman interpretation. They did not indeed suggest such an interpretation on their surface, but they were patient of it. He argued this with extreme ingenuity, and some special pleading, but, as I think, with a good deal of success. Certainly he has had followers who have largely availed themselves of an unexpected and welcome elasticity in the direction of Romanism, thus unexpectedly discovered in, or extracted out of, or perhaps foisted into what was intended to be a rigidly Protestant document and scheme of Protestant theology.

And so it will always be with a living and growing Church, or any other organism—quite irrespective of the rights and wrongs of any particular controversy or School of thought. If the thought or School exist, if living and earnest people feel that truth and progress lie in a particular direction, then, however ultimately mistaken they turn out to be, no system of formularies can bind them; they will not hand over their conscience and their judgment to the custody of a past. They can be loyal to a living and present spirit in the Church to-day, but not to dead formularies. These they will either ignore, or will take in a non-natural sense, or will twist till they mean the opposite of what they were intended to mean. A form

of words is usually capable of interpretation in accordance with a living will; and if not, it can be either ignored or altered.

History is familiar enough with obsolete and repealed Statutes: why should the Statutes which regulate so vital a thing as the professed National Religion alone be free from reconsideration and amendment? If non-alteration be regarded as necessitated by some theory,—that theory is a superstition; the only justification for rigid adherence to fixed forms is the practical danger of licence and unsettling of faith that might result from freedom. That is a point of policy on which it is possible for reasonable people to take opposite sides, at any particular juncture or crisis; but it will be generally admitted that a faith dependent on blinkers and fetters for its maintenance is not likely in a progressive age to last many generations. Anchorage to a submerged rock is not safe amid rising waters.

Suggestions Concerning the Liturgy

The Liturgy itself must be dealt with by experts, and it is barely proper for me to make suggestions; but having gone so far I will hesitate no more, but will proceed in brief and dogmatic fashion to say what I feel constrained to say. For it is an admitted fact that the Church of England is less in touch with the people than it used to be, and this is not likely to be wholly and solely the fault of the people. Indeed it may be due to unwisdom rather than to fault of any kind.

At present both the Daily Services are supposed to open with the note of personal sin. But it is to a great extent unreal, and the declaration of absolution follows far too cheaply and easily. Moreover, even if such a beginning is appropriate sometimes, or to some people, it is not always and equally appropriate; and when constantly repeated such confession becomes merely monotonous, exciting no feeling or intelligence whatever.

If a service is to be efficacious against sin, it should deal with it far more seriously and continuously. If felt as a reality sin is no light matter, and should not be casually slurred over. During such a service, dominated by the sense of personal sinfulness and contrition, the confession of the Communion service is likely to be more effective than the other. The Litany would be an appropriate continuation: many things should precede a declaration of Remission.

But there should be more than one form of service: there might be at least three alternative forms—sometimes one, sometimes another to be used. One form of service should sound a different note; it might be a service not of contrition but of praise. It might open with the Benedictus, continue with the General Thanksgiving, with the Te Deum, the Cantate, or the Venite—without the Jewish ending if possible—and so forth. And in all these services the great and eloquent short prayers need never be omitted, such as the prayer of St. Chrysostom, the Collects for Peace and for Grace, and, when appropriate, the Evening Collects, as also that for the special day,

together with Epistle and Gospel and of course the Lessons.

But the multiplicity and wearisome number of extracts from the Psalter might be mitigated with advantage. The Psalms for the day might be omitted altogether. There can be no need to work through the whole Psalter every month: it is a useless burden; besides, a few of the Psalms are hardly edifying in worship, however instructive they are as historical and biographical lessons.

At times of stress or anxiety a special selection of prayers might be made, and at all times extempore and spontaneous prayer should be permissible. It is profoundly wrong that a petition from the heart of a minister of God is never to be uttered during Divine service. It is an edict of suppression and impotence for the reading desk: of dulness and starvation for the pew. "For a certain measure of variety arrests and engages the attention of worshippers, and sustains their interest." The very name "reading desk" is full of wrong suggestions. The lectern is appropriately named, and so is the pulpit, but the spirit of genuine supplication should brood over at least a part of the service.

Another form of service—where forms are used—might be dominated by the idea of collective or social struggle and error, by the sense of national and corporate sin, by effort after better conditions of existence for others, and by the spirit of public service. Here would come the prayer for Royalty, for Parliament, for the Clergy, for all people; as well as others

appropriately chosen, and many added to suit the needs of the time.

At all times it is appropriate to remember the sick and suffering, the prisoners and captives, the desolate and oppressed; just as it is always natural to pray for peace; and in these cases prayer is not merely intercessory prayer, but is a petition for the impulse ourselves to do what lies in our own power to aid in these so touching and so accessible ranges of activity in direct human service.

The keynote of each service should be reality. There should be no vain repetition and no mere formulæ recited in haste without attention to meaning. At present far too much is attempted—far too much in quantity,—and this perhaps is responsible for the hurry and apparent desire to get through. Surely everything said should be said deliberately and impressively. Possibly, however, the present manner of utterance is not really or solely dependent on the amount to be got through in the time, but is a relic of the Roman practice of reciting prayers in Latin, so as not to be understanded of the common people; with the object apparently of exciting vague emotion undiluted with intelligence. The practice is venerable—but it is hardly consistent with the genius of the Church of England. Intelligibility throughout is surely not a thing to be deprecated, if it can be secured. To this end the service should be short in length, even though not always short in time. *Non multa sed multum* applies intensely to the effective use of a Liturgy. A quantity gabbled through is

useless and unimpressive. A small amount really driven home is far more effective. The Te Deum is specially effective when sung slowly and deliberately. It was so sung in more than one church at the last Declaration of Peace.

Above all, the Lord's Prayer, with its brief and profound sentences, is not properly treated when subjected to the gabble of a choir. Every sentence involves thought. The single phrase "Thy Kingdom come" speaks volumes, and by itself is sufficient for a morning's worship. As a musician takes a theme and develops it fugally and antiphonally with devices of augmentation and diminution and with illuminating counterpoint, so could such a theme as this be made to dominate and re-appear throughout a service. The repetition of the Lord's Prayer several times in an hour signifies the intention to use it as a sort of refrain; but as a refrain it is ineffective, the repetition is far too mechanical and careless. The clauses are worthy of better treatment than that.

Take such a clause as "Thy will be done";—it embraces the whole of religion. If I were a musician I would set the Lord's Prayer to music, and with clashes of instruments and with silences would bring out a part of its meaning in unmistakable manner.[1] The opening phrase "Our Father which art in heaven" may in its full form exhibit signs of liturgical growth or addition, but the note "Father," the dominant of all the chords, is authentic enough. It

[1] When I wrote this "The Kingdom" had not been produced, and I did not then know the scheme of Sir Edward Elgar's work.

is all that appears in Luke (Hort and Westcott's text), and it is enough.

Wider Education

We need only refer in very general terms to the sort of education appropriate to a candidate for the Ministry of the Gospel. He must be instructed in professional subjects, of course—I say nothing about those; but it is plain that if he is to have any influence on the thought of his time, he must not be ignorant of that thought. If he is to mix with people, and adapt himself to various conditions of men, he must be able to retain their respect. Immersion in the atmosphere of scholastic theology alone will not suffice. The Bible is a literature with which he must be familiar, but he must not be a man of one book. If he knows only the Bible, he will not know that. A broad and general education should be his, and the discoveries of his age should not be alien to him. In the course of his career he is bound to meet argumentative sceptics; men sometimes of narrow sympathies, but occasionally of fairly wide reading. These he should be able to encounter on their own ground.

It is true that to take a leading position, and to grasp a considerable range of human knowledge, is not given to all; there must be some whose lives are cast amid simpler surroundings, and who will there feel more at home. That is well; but we are considering the ideal up to which a few can be trained, while the majority will rise towards it as far as they can, though they fall short of attainment. The ideal for

a minister of Christ to-day is not represented by that held out in the charge of the Ordination service, "apply yourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all your cares and studies this way;" it is not enough, nor is it even wise, to limit study to one thing, and to forsake and set aside all other studies.

Certainly something just and needful is intended, by that warning against worldly cares and studies, but it is liable to be misunderstood. And even in affairs of business, it may be argued that as so many of the clergy have to address men of business, it would be wise for them not to be wholly ignorant and incompetent even in that atmosphere. It is no easy service which the nation demands of its religious teachers—it is the highest and most difficult possible; and the very best and ablest men are needed for the work, if it is to be done properly. At present many are deflected to other careers. In some cases the deflection is due to attraction elsewhere; but in too many it must happen that a faithful and competent man is either consciously or unconsciously repelled by the demands and injunctions placed in his way,—by the attempt made to scare his present conscience or to snare his future one. He knows that the critical spirit is not the spirit of worship; but he knows also that, however successfully his critical faculty may be put to sleep for a time, it will rise and torment him later on if he abandons his birthright of growth and freedom. So he chooses another vocation.

Tests

And now, what about tests? What tests should be applied to candidates for ordination, so as to exclude self-seeking hypocrites and stealthy infidels? Whatever words are used, the test-formula should be said by the candidate himself, not by another for him; and it should be said without prompting. The amount of memory needed, for a simple rehearsal like that, is not too much to expect from a man to whom preaching and the cure of souls is to be entrusted. A simple form should suffice: why should not the following be held sufficient?

Here, solemnly in the face of this congregation, I declare before Almighty God, to whose holy will I entirely submit myself, that I long for Christ's ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth; and, God helping me, I will with all my power and ability strive to this end and to no other, with such wisdom as it may please the Holy Spirit to confer upon me; for whose guidance I will always pray to the Father, in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Such a declaration, made in full voice and with uplifted hand, would be far more solemn and impressive as an answer to the question whether he thinks he is truly called to the ministry of the Church, than the present curious expected answer, "I think so."

Some further declaration on the secular side, against the domination of any foreign potentate in this realm, and some precautionary statement against Jesuitical interpretation and underground scheming,

would seem to be necessary also. Moreover, it would be desirable so to legislate that no weapon of superstition could ever be wielded, by Church authority, so as to inflict on the laity that element of compulsion from which the clergy had been freed. It is to be hoped that certain anti-English auricular practices will never be permitted in the National Church, however comprehensive it may become.

Re-incorporation

This article ought to close with practical suggestions as to how Nonconformist bodies are to be re-incorporated into the National Church; but that must be left to others. I know that at the time of writing an unexpected and most regrettable recrudescence of hostilities has arisen between the State Church and the Free Churches—animosity breaking out over the primary education of the children of the poor—showing that the pugnacious spirit was only dormant, and that any immediately practical suggestions towards general Christian co-operation would be untimely.

But surely such a state of things can only be temporary. Either some mutual understanding is possible on such a subject, or the country is on the verge of an era of secularism.

It may be that thorough union will come only through disestablishment—that a truly comprehensive National Church is impossible. That is one way towards freedom of conscience. Either the State Church must be enlarged, broadened, and liberated—

freed from exclusive dignities too dearly bought,—or it must cease to be a State Church.

I will not attempt to forecast the course of history: all that I am concerned to urge is union, for the purpose of fighting a common foe, cessation of internecine quarrels, unison of effort among all the branches of the Church of Christ. To me it seems that, as soon as artificial restrictions and disabilities are removed, the re-incorporation will be almost automatic—or would be so were it not for the question of pre-restoration endowments. If a money question is all that would then hinder union—if there is nothing more serious and fundamental than property to be considered—it would be a fact worth finding out.

My attention has just been called to certain articles on Church and State, issued in 1891 by Dr. Martineau as vol. ii. of his collected *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses.* Some of them deal with this very matter, especially the essay called "The National Church as a Federal Union." He pointed out the inconsistency of a Church priding itself, simultaneously, both on its rigorous uniformity and on the width of the range of its belief; and says that while the Acts of Uniformity remain, the work of the Church will be honeycombed by the canker of unveracity and self-sophistication.

I will not repeat his arguments and proposals, for whether those particular proposals are hopeless or not, the spirit of his vision of the unity of Christendom—the longing to see the various folds all one flock, in accordance with the parting prayer of Christ,

"for them which shall believe on me . . . that they all may be one"—remains as real as ever. Moreover, many of the non-established Churches are riper for union among themselves now than they were even a short time ago; and I will quote the concluding words of the preface to the volume containing Martineau's ecclesiastical essays:

"I cannot withdraw a protest, however hopeless it may seem, against allowing the Christian Church to remain a mere cluster of rival orthodoxies, disowning and repelling each other; while, in the inmost heart of all, secret affections live and pray, with eye upturned to the same Infinite Perfection, and tears let fall for the same universal sorrows."

SECTION III—THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

The substance of this section was given as the first lecture on the Drew foundation established in connexion with Hackney College, London, under the presidency of Dr. Forsyth.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRANSITORY AND THE PERMANENT

Part I

"If a man is shut up in a house, the transparency of the windows is an essential condition of his seeing the sky. But it would not be prudent to infer that, if he walked out of the house, he could not see the sky because there was no longer any glass through which he might see it."—M'Taggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion,* p. 105.

DR. M'TAGGART, in his book called *Some Dogmas of Religion,* from which I have taken the excellent apologue [1] prefixed as a sort of motto to this article, says some things with which I am not able wholly to agree. I should like to deal with these at greater length in some other connexion, but meanwhile I will quote one of them. In his chapter on Human Immortality he says that an affirmative answer to the question "Has man an immortal soul?" would be absurd. He wishes to maintain that man *is* a soul rather than that he *has* one; because the possessive case would indicate, he says, that the man himself was his body, or was something that died with the body, and that he owned something, not himself, which at death was set free.

1 This must not be understood as sustaining what Mr. Haldane derisively calls the "window" theory of the senses, as if they were apertures through which an inner man looked out at an alien universe: a parable must not be pressed unduly.

But if we make the correlative statement, and say that "man has a body," surely we are stating an undeniable truth. And as to what the man himself is—I apprehend that he is a union of soul and body; and that without the one or the other he is incomplete as a man, and becomes something else—a corpse perhaps, a spirit perhaps, or it may be both. But whereas the two were necessarily united during the man's life, death separates them; and the final product, whatever it is, can be described as "man" no longer. Hence the form of the question preferred by Dr. M'Taggart, "Are men immortal?" does not seem to me so appropriate as the more popular and antique form, "Is the soul immortal?" For surely without hesitation everybody must give to his question, about man, the answer: "Not wholly," or "Not every part of him." Part of what constitutes human nature is certainly mortal. On one side man undoubtedly belongs to the animal kingdom, and flourishes on this planet, the Earth, by aid of particles of terrestrial matter which he utilises for that purpose.

By the soul, then, we must mean that part of man which is dissociated from the body at death: that part which is characteristic of a living man as distinct from a corpse. It may be said that it is really more an inter-relation than a part, and that this inter-relation is what is meant by vitality; so that it has been roundly asserted that the apparently disappeared "vitality" is a nonentity or figment of the imagination, and that to speak of it as still existing is like speaking of the

"horologity" of a clock which someone has smashed with a hammer.

Very well, admitting that vitality is a mere relation between the body and something else, it is just the nature of this "something else" that we are discussing; and it is no help to start by assuming that this dissociated and perhaps imaginary portion is the man himself, any more than it is helpful to start with the equally gratuitous assumption that the visible and tangible body is the man himself.

The vanished constituent with its attributes may turn out to be more intimately characteristic of, and essential to, the man's real nature and existence, than is the material instrument or organ which has been discarded without having disappeared: they may turn out to have a more permanent and therefore a more real existence than the temporary vehicle which served to manifest those attributes and properties during their short tenure of earth life; they may be more especially the seat of his personality and individuality; —but those are just the things which are subject-matter for debate, and they must not be postulated *a priori*.

As a matter of nomenclature, I want to discriminate between the term "vitality" and the term "life"; to use the former as signifying a union or *relation* between the body and something else, and the latter to denote the unknown entity which by interaction with material particles is responsible for their vitality. True, life, thus defined, is a portion or partial aspect

of what is often spoken of as "soul," but the term life can be used by many to whom some of the associations of the more comprehensive term are objectionable.

The first simple and important truth that must be insisted on, is the commonplace but often ignored and even denied fact, that there is nothing immortal or persistent about the material instrument of our present senses, except the atoms of which it is composed.

Any notion that these same atoms will at some future date be re-collected and united with the dissociated and immaterial portion, so as to constitute once more the complete man as he appeared here on earth, who is thereafter to last for ever,—any notion of that sort, though most unfortunately believed, or at least taught, by one great branch of the Christian Church, is a superstition, not by any means yet really and thoroughly extinct or without influence on sentiment, even in quarters where it may be denied in words. It is too much to expect that is should be so extinct.

Nevertheless, the teaching of natural science is in accordance with the teaching of common sense in this matter. The present body is wholly composed of terrestrial particles; it consists of atoms of matter collected from food and air, and arranged in a certain complicated and characteristic form. The elemental atoms are first combined into the complex aggregate called protoplasm, which is an unstable compound whose chemical constitution is at present unknown, but whose property it is to be always in a state of flux: it is not rigid or stagnant or fixed, but is constantly

breaking down into simpler constituents on one side, and constantly being renewed or built up on the other, so that it has a kind of life-history, for a certain period. This period of activity, in any given case, lasts as long as the balance between association and dissociation continues. While the balance is tilting in favour of assimilation, we have the period of youth and growth; when the balance begins to tilt in favour of disintegration, we have the commencement of old age and decay; until at a certain, or rather an uncertain, stage, the disintegrating forces gain a final victory, and assimilation wholly and sometimes suddenly ceases. Then presently and by slow degrees the residue of protoplasm left in the body—unless it is speedily incorporated into some other animal or plant—is resolved into similar and simpler compounds, and ultimately into inorganic constituents; and so is restored to mother Earth, whence it sprang.

What, then, can be legitimately meant by the phrase Resurrection of the body? Well it is highly desirable to disentangle the element of truth which underlies ancient beliefs and is the condition of their durability; and, whatever may be the case with other forms of religion, it is clear that Christianity both by its doctrines and its ceremonies rightly emphasises the material aspect of existence. For it is founded upon the idea of incarnation; and its belief in some sort of bodily resurrection is based on the idea that every real personal existence must have a double aspect—not spiritual alone, nor physical alone, but in some way both. Such an opinion, in a refined form, is common

to many systems of philosophy and is by no means out of harmony with science.

Christianity, therefore, reasonably supplements the mere survival of a discarnate spirit, a homeless wanderer or melancholy ghost, with the warm and comfortable clothing of something that may legitimately be spoken of as a "body"; that is to say it postulates a supersensually appreciable vehicle or mode of manifestation, fitted to subserve the needs of future existence as our bodies subserve the needs of terrestrial life: an etherial or other entity constituting the persistent "other aspect," and fulfilling some of the functions which the atoms of terrestrial matter are constrained to fulfil now. And we may assume, as consonant with or even as part of Christianity, the doctrine of the dignity and sacramental character of some physical or quasi-material counterpart of every spiritual essence.

But though some such connexion is essential, any actual instance of it may be accidental and temporary. Take our present incarnation as an example. We display ourselves to mankind in the garb of certain clothes, artificially constructed of animal and vegetable materials, and in the form of a certain material organism, put together by processes of digestion and assimilation and likewise composed of terrestrial materials. The source of these chemical compounds is evidently not important; nor is their special character maintained. Whether they formed part of sheep or birds or fish or plants, they are assimilated and become part of us; being arranged by our subconscious

activities and vital processes into appropriate form, just as truly as other materials are consciously woven into garments, no matter what their origin. Moreover, just as our clothes wear out and require darning and patching, so our bodies wear out; the particles are in continual flux, each giving place to others and being constantly discarded and renewed. The identity of the actual or instantaneous body is therefore an affair of no importance: the body which finally dies is no more fully representative of the individual than any of the other bodies which have gradually been discarded *en route:* there is no reason why it should persist any more than they: the individuality, if there is one, must lie deeper than any particular body, and must belong to whatever it is which put the particles together in this shape and not another.

There is nothing at all similar to this automatic decay and replacement, this preservation of form amid diversity of particles, in the mechanism of a clock. All that its "horologity" could mean would be the special assemblage or grouping of parts which enables it to fulfil certain functions till it wears out, or so long as its worn parts are periodically replaced by the clockmaker. The "vitality" of an organism means this and more, for it can replace its own worn parts. A clock has nothing of personal identity, it is not a good illustration of a living organism. The identity of a river is a much closer analogy; and many are the associations which have accordingly gathered round the names "Tiber," "Ganges," "Nile." Rivers have always had attributed to them a kind of poetic per-

sonality, though no one can have really supposed them to possess genuine life.

I wish here to make a short digression in order to say that the old and true statement that "everything flows and nothing is stagnant," thus conspicuously exemplified by the material basis of life, need not in the least signify, as it is sometimes taken to signify, that everything is evanescent and nothing is permanent; still less than everything is fanciful and nothing is real. The ancient aphorism of the inspired Heraclitus makes a statement about existence which is vitally and comprehensively true; and it is a truth which constitutes the keynote of evolution.

To return. The more frankly and clearly the truth about the body is realised, namely, that the body is a flowing and constantly changing episode in material history, having no more identity than has a river, no identity whatever in its material constitution, but only in its form,—identity only in the personal expression or manifestation which is achieved through the agency of a fresh and constantly differing sequence of material particles,—the more frankly all this is realised, the better for our understanding of most of the problems of life and being.

The body is the instrument or organ of the soul: and in its special form and aggregation is certainly temporary,—exceedingly temporary, for in the most durable cases it lasts only about a thousand months—a mere instant in the life-history of a planet.

But if the body is thus trivial and temporary,

though while it lasts most beautiful and useful and wonderful, what is it that puts it together and keeps it active and retains it fairly constant through all the vicissitudes of climate and condition, and through all the fluctuations of material constitution?

For remember that we are now not dealing with the human body alone. All animals have bodies and so have plants. All that has been said, of the temporary character of the material aggregate animated by life, applies to a vast variety of organisms, many of which can be encountered on the earth: not to speak of the myriads of other worlds.

What causes the very same particles to be incorporated first into the form of a blade of grass, then into the form of a sheep, then into the form of a man; then into the form of some law invertebrates—"politic worms" (for whose existence, however, in normal cases there is, I believe, no biological authority),—then perhaps into a bird, then once more into vegetation—perhaps a tree? What is it that combines and arranges the particles, so that if absorbed by root or leaves they correspond to and form the tissue of an oak, if picked up by talons, they help to feed the muscles of an eagle, if cooked for dinner, they enter into the nerves and brain of a man? What is the controlling entity in each case, which causes each to have its own form and not another, and preserves the form constant amid the widest diversity of particles?

We call it life, we call it soul, we call it by various names, and we do not know what it is. But common

sense rebels against its being "nothing"; nor has any genuine science presumed to declare that it is purely imaginary.

Let us now, therefore, try to define what we mean by "soul," though in our necessary ignorance the task is not easy. The term is indeed so ambiguous that many may think it is better avoided altogether; but the more precise term "mind" is too narrow and exclusive for our present purpose.

The following definition may sufficiently represent my present meaning: The soul is that controlling and guiding principle which is responsible for our personal expression and for the construction of the body, under the restrictions of physical condition and ancestry. In its higher development it includes also feeling and intelligence and will, and is the storehouse of mental experience. The body is its instrument or organ, enabling it to receive and to convey physical impressions, and to affect and be affected by matter and energy.

When the body is destroyed, therefore, the soul disappears from physical ken; when the body is impaired, its function is interfered with, and the soul's physical reaction becomes feeble and unsatisfactory. Thus has arisen the popular misconception that the soul of a slain person or of a cripple or paralytic has been destroyed or damaged; whereas only its instrument of manifestation need have been affected. The kind of evils which really assault and hurt the soul belong to a different category.

It may be said that, in so far as soul is responsible

for bodily shape, soul seems identical with the principle of *life,* and that all living things must possess some rudiment of soul.

Well, for myself, I do not see how to draw a hard-and-fast distinction between one form of life and another. All are animated by something which does not belong to the realm of physics and chemistry, but lies outside their province, though it interacts with the material entities of their realm. Life is not matter, nor is it energy, it is a guiding and directing principle; and when considered as incorporated in a certain organism, it, and all that appertains to it, may well be called the soul or constructive and controlling element in that organism.

The soul in this sense is related to the organism in somewhat the same way as the "Logos" is related to the universe; it is that without which it does not exist, that which vivifies and constructs, or composes and informs, the whole.

Moreover, in the higher organisms the soul conspicuously has lofty potentialities; it not only includes what is connoted by the term "mind," but it begins to acquire some of the character of "spirit"; by which means it becomes related to the Divine Being. Soul appears to be the link between "spirit" and "matter"; and, according to its grade, it may be chiefly associated with one or with the other of these two great aspects of the universe.

Now let us consider what is meant by Immortality. Is there anything that is not subject to death and an-

nihilation? Can we predicate immortality about anything? Everything is subject to change, but are all things subject to death? Without change there could be no activity, and the universe would be stagnant; but without death it is not so clear that its progress would be obstructed; unless death be only a sort of change.

But is it not a sort of change? Consider some examples: When a piece of coal is burnt and brought to an apparent end, the particles of long-fossilised wood are not destroyed; they enter into the atmosphere as gaseous constituents, and the long-locked-up solar energy is released from its potential form and appears once more as light and heat. The burning of the coal is a kind of resurrection; and yet it is a kind of death too, and to the superficial eye nothing is left but ashes.

Take next the destruction of a picture or a statue, let it be torn to pieces or mashed to powder: there is nothing to suggest resurrection about that, and the beautiful form embodied in the material has disappeared.

Such a dissolution is a more serious matter, and may be the result of a really malicious act. It is perhaps the nearest approach to genuine destruction that is possible to man, and in some cases represents the material concomitant of a hideous crime. True, nothing material is destroyed, the particles weigh just as much as before; yet the expression is gone, the beauty is defaced, an idea perhaps is lost.

But, after all, the idea was never really in the

marble or in the pigments; it was embodied or incarnate or displayed by them, in a sense, but it was not really *there*. It was in the mind of the artist who constructed the work, and it entered the mind of the spectators who beheld it—at least of those who had the requisite perceptive faculty; but it was never in the stone at all. The inert material, from the impress of mind it had received, was able to call out and liberate in a kindred mind some of the original feelings and thoughts which had gone to fashion it. Without a perceptive faculty, without a sympathetic mind, the material was powerless. Set up in, or sent to, a world inhabited only by lower animals, it would convey no message whatever, it would be wholly meaningless; just as a piece of manuscript would be, in such a world, though it contained the divinest poem ever written.

Nevertheless, by the supposed act of vandalism a certain incarnation of beauty has been lost to the world. Though even so it is not destroyed out of the universe: it remains the possession of the artist and of those privileged to feel along with him.

Consider next the destruction of a tree or of an animal. Here again the particles remain as many as before, it is only their arrangement that is altered; the matter is conserved but has lost its shape; the energy is constant in quantity but has changed its form. What has disappeared? The thing that has disappeared is the life—the life which appeared to be in the tree or the animal, the life which had composed or constructed it by aid of sunshine and atmosphere, and

was manifested by it. Its incarnate form has now gone—no more will that life be displayed amidst its old surroundings, it has disappeared from our ken; apparently it has disappeared from the planet. Has it gone out of existence altogether?

If it were really generated *de novo,* created out of nothing, at the birth of the animal or of the tree, we should be entitled to assume that at death it may have returned to the nonentity whence it came.

But why nonentity? What do we know of nonentity? Is it a reasonable or conceivable idea? Things when they vanish are only hidden. And so conversely: it is readily intelligible that some existence, some bodily presentation, can be evoked out of a hidden or imperceptible or latent or potential existence, and be made actual and perceptible and what we call real. Instances of that sort are constantly occurring. It occurs when a composer produces a piece of music, it occurs when an artisan constructs a piece of furniture, it occurs when a spider spins a web, and when the atmosphere deposits dew. But what example can we think of where existence is created out of nonentity, where nothing turns into something? We can think of plenty of examples of change, of organisation, of something apparently complex and highly developed arising out of a germ apparently simple; but there must always be at least a seed, or nothing will arise; nothing can come out of nothing: something must always have its origin in something.

A radium atom is an element possessing in itself the seeds of its own destruction. Every now and then

it explodes and fires off a portion of itself. This can occur several times in succession, and finally it seems to become inert and to cease to be radium or anything like it; it is thought by some to have become lead, while the particles thrown off have become helium, or occasionally neon, or sometimes argon. Let us suppose that. We cannot stop there, we are bound to go on to ask what was the origin of the radium itself. If it explodes itself to pieces in the course of a few thousand years, why does any radium still exist? How is it being born? Does it spring into existence out of nothing, or has it some parent? And if it has a parent, what was the origin of that parent?

Never in physical science do we surmise for a moment that something suddenly springs into being from previous non-existence. All that we perceive can be accounted for by changes of aggregation, by assemblage and dispersion. Of material aggregates we can trace the history, as we can trace the history of continents and islands, of suns and planets and stars; we can say, or try to say, whence they arose and what they will become; but never do we state that they will vanish into nothingness, nor do we ever conjecture that they arose from nothing.

It is true that in religion we seek to trace things farther back still, and ultimately say that everything arose from God; and there, perforce, our chain of existence, our links of antecedence and sequence must cease. But to allow such a statement to act as an intellectual refuge can only be a concession to human infirmity. Everything truly arose from God; but

there is nothing specially illuminating in such a statement as that, for everything is in God now; and everything will continue to be animated and sustained by God to all eternity. It is not legitimate explicitly to introduce the idea of God to explain the past alone; the term applies equally to the present and to the future.

So the assertion just made, though true enough, is only a mode of saying that what was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. This is a religious mode of expressing our conviction of the uniformity of the Eternal Character, but it is not a statement which adds to our scientific information. We may not be able to understand Nature, we are certainly unable to comprehend God. If we say that Nature is an aspect of the Divine Being, we must be speaking truly; but that only strengthens our present argument as to its durability and permanence, for we shall certainly not thus be led to attribute to anything so qualified any power of either jumping into or jumping out of existence. To make the statement that Nature is an aspect of the Godhead is explicitly to postulate eternity for every really existing thing, and to say that what we call death is not annihilation but only change. Birth is change. Death is change. A happy change, perhaps; a melancholy change, perhaps. That all depends upon circumstances and special cases, and on the point of view from which things are regarded; but, anyhow, an inevitable change.

I want to make the distinct assertion that no really

existing thing perishes, but only changes its form.

Physical science teaches us this, clearly enough, concerning matter and energy: the two great entities with which it has to do. And there is no likelihood of any great modification in this teaching. It may, perhaps, be induced in the long-run to modify the form of statement and to assert conservation and real existence of ether and motion (or, perhaps only, of ether *in* motion) rather than of matter and energy. That is quite possible, but the apparent variation of statement is only a variant in form; its essence and meaning are the same, except that it is now more general and would allow even the atoms of matter themselves to have their day and cease to be; being resolved, perhaps, into electricity, and that into some hitherto unimagined mode of motion of the ether. But all this is far from being accepted at present, and need not here be considered.

The distinction between what is transitory and what is permanent is quite clear. Evanescence is to be stated concerning every kind of "system" and aggregation and grouping. A crowd assembles, and then it disperses: it is a crowd no more. A cloud forms in the sky, and soon once more the sky is blue again; the cloud has died. Dew forms on a leaf: a little while, and it has gone again—gone apparently into nothingness, like the cloud. But we know better, both for cloud and dew. In an imperceptible form it was and soon into an imperceptible form it will again have passed; but meanwhile there is the dewdrop glistening in the sun, reflecting all the movements of

the neighbouring world, and contributing its little share to the beauty and the serviceableness of creation.

Its perceptible or incarnate existence is temporary. As a drop it was born, and as a drop it dies; but as aqueous vapour it persists: an intrinsically imperishable substance, with all the properties persisting which enabled it to condense into drop or cloud. Even it, therefore, has the attribute of immortality.

So, then, what about life? Can that be a nonentity which has built up particles of carbon and hydrogen and oxygen into the form of an oak or an eagle or a man? Is it something which is really nothing; and soon shall it be manifestly the nothing that an ignorant and purblind creature may suppose it to be?

Not so; nor is it so with intellect and consciousness and will, nor with memory and love and adoration, nor all the manifold activities which at present strangely interact with matter and appeal to our bodily senses and terrestrial knowledge; they are not nothing, nor shall they ever vanish into nothingness or cease to be. They did not arise with us: they never did spring into being; they are as eternal as the Godhead itself, and in the eternal Being they shall endure for ever.

> Though earth and man were gone,
> And suns and universes ceased to be,
> And Thou were left alone,
> Every existence would exist in Thee."

So sang Emily Brontë on her deathbed, in a poem which Mr. Haldane quotes in full, in his Gifford Lectures, as containing true philosophy. And, surely

in this respect there is a unity running through the universe, and a kinship between the human and the Divine: witness the eloquent ejaculation of Carlyle:

"What, then, is man! What, then, is man!

"He endures but for an hour, and is crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the working of a faithful man is there already (as all faith from the beginning, gives assurance) a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of Time; that triumphs over Time, and *is*, and will be, when Time shall be no more."

CHAPTER IX

THE PERMANENCE OF PERSONALITY

Part II

"After death the soul possesses self-consciousness, otherwise it would be the subject of spiritual death, which has already been disproved. With this self-consciousness necessarily remains personality and the consciousness of personal identity."—Kant, quoted by Heinze.

IN the preceding chapter on "The Transitory and the Permanent," permanence was claimed for the essence, the intrinsic reality, the *soul* of anything; and transitoriness for its bodily presentment—that is, for all such things as special groupings, arrangements, systems, which are liable to break up into their constituent elements, and cease to cohere into a united and organised aggregate. The only real destruction known to us, in fact, is this disintegration or breaking up of an assemblage: things themselves never spring into or out of existence. All we can cause or can observe is variety of *motion*—never creation or annihilation. And even the motion is *transferred* from one body to another, and transformed in the process; it is not generated from nothing, nor can it be destroyed. Special groupings and appearances are transitory; it is their intrinsic and constructive essence which is permanent.

But then, what about personality, individuality, our

own character and self? Are these akin to the temporary groupings which shall be dissolved, or are they among the substantial realities that shall endure?

Let us see how to define the idea of personality or personal and individual character:—A memory, a consciousness, and a will, in so far as they form a consistent harmonious whole, constitute a personality; which thus has relations with the past, the present, and the future. And we shall argue that personality or individuality itself dominates and transcends all temporal modes of expression, and so is essentially eternal wherever it exists.

The life of an insect or a tree may in some sort—must, one would think, in some sort—persist, but surely not its personal character! Why not? Because, presumably, it has none. We can hardly imagine that such a thing has any individuality or personality: it appears to us to be merely one of a group, a mere unit in a world of being, without personality of its own. That is what I assume, though I do not dogmatise; nor do I consider it certain, for some of the higher animals. Anyhow we may at once admit that, for all those things which only share in a general life, the temporarily separated portion of that general life will return, undifferentiated and unidentified, to its central store: just as happens in the better-understood categories of matter and energy.

That is simple enough. But suppose that some individual character, some personality, *does* exist. Suppose that not only life, but intellect and emotion and consciousness and will are all associated with a

certain physical organism; and suppose that these things have a real and undeniable existence—an existence strengthened and compacted by experience and suffering and joy, till it is no longer only a function of the material aggregate in which for a time it is embodied, but belongs to a universe of spirit closely related to immanent and transcendent Diety; what then? If all that really exists, in the highest sense, is immortal, we have only to ask whether our personality, our character, our self, is sufficiently individual, sufficiently characteristic, sufficiently developed,—in a word, sufficiently *real;* for if it is, there can then be no doubt of its continuance. It may return, indeed, in some sense, to the central store, but not without identity; its individual character will be preserved.

Conservation of Value

Professor Höffding of Copenhagen goes farther than this. In his book on the Philosophy of Religion he teaches that what he calls the axiom of "the conservation of value" is the fundamental ingredient in all religions—the foundation without which none of them could stand. In his view, as a philosopher, agreeing therein with Browning and other poets, no real Value or Good is ever lost. The whole progress and course of evolution is to increase and intensify the Valuable—that which "avails" or is serviceable for highest purposes,—and it does so by bringing out that which was potential or latent, so as to make it actual and real. Real it was, no doubt, all the time in some sense, as an oak is implicit in an acorn or a

flower in a bud, but in process of time it unfolds and adds to the realised Value of the universe.

To carry out this idea we might define immortality thus:

Immortality is the persistence of the essential and the real: it applies to things which the universe has gained—things which, once acquired, cannot be let go. It is an example of the conservation of Value. The tendency of evolution is to increase the actuality of Value, converting it from a potential into an available form.

Value may, however, be something more than merely constant in quantity, according to Professor Höffding. Experience of evolution suggests that it must increase. Certainly it passes from latent to more patent forms; and though it sometimes swings back, yet, on the whole, progress seems upward. Is it not legitimate to conjecture that while Matter and Energy neither increase nor decrease, but only change in form; and while life too perhaps is constant in quantity, though alternating into and out of incarnation according as material organisms are put together or worn out; yet that some of the higher attributes of existence,—love, shall we say, joy perhaps, what may be generalised as Good generally, or as Availability or Value,—may actually increase: their apparent alternations being really the curves of an upward-tending spiral? It is an optimistic faith, but it is the faith of the poets and seers. Whatever evil days may fall upon an individual or a nation, or even sometimes on a whole planet, yet the material is

subordinate to the spiritual; and if the spiritual persists, it cannot be stationary: it must surely rise in the scale of existence. For evil is that which retards or frustrates development, in any part of the universe subject to its sway, and, accordingly, its kingdom cannot stand: evil contains an essentially suicidal element, so that on the whole the realm of the good must tend to increase, the realm of the bad to diminish.

"No existing universe can tend on the whole towards contraction and decay; because that would foster annihilation, and so any incipient attempt would not have survived; consequently an actually existing and flowing universe must on the whole cherish development, expansion, growth: and so tend towards infinity rather than towards zero. The problem is therefore only a variant of the general problem of existence. Given existence, of a non-stagnant kind, and ultimate development must be its law. Good and evil can be defined in terms of development and decay respectively. This may be regarded as part of a revelation of the nature of God" (*The Substance of Faith*).

From this point of view the law of evolution is that Good shall on the whole increase in the universe with the process of the suns: that immortality itself is a special case of a more general Law, namely, that in the whole universe nothing really finally perishes that is worth keeping, that a thing once attained is not thrown away.

The general mutability and mortality in the world need not perturb us. The things we see perishing

and dying are not of the same kind as those which we hope will endure. Death and decay, as we know them, are interesting physical processes, which may be studied and understood; they have seized the imagination of man, and govern his emotions, perhaps unduly, but there is nothing in them to suggest ultimate destruction, or the final triumph of ill; they are necessary correlatives to conception and birth into a material world; they do not really contradict an optimistic view of existence.

So far as we can tell, there need be no real waste, no real loss, no annihilation; but everything sufficiently valuable, be it beauty, artistic achievement, knowledge, unselfish affection, may be thought of as enduring henceforth and for ever if not with an individual and personal existence, yet as part of the eternal Being of God.

Permanent Element in Man

And this carries with it the persistence of personality in all creatures who have risen to the attainment of God-like faculties, such as self-determination and other attributes which suggest kinship with Deity and make their possessor a member of the Divine family. For whether or not this incipient theory of the conservation of value stand the test of criticism, it is undeniable that, as in the quotation from Carlyle at the end of my last article, seers do not hesitate to attribute permanence and timeless existence to the essential element in man himself. They realise that he is one with the universe, that he may come to be in

tune with the infinite, and that his spasmodic efforts towards a state wherein the average will rise to a level now attained by only the few, are part of the evolutionary travailing of the whole creation. "All omens," says Myers, "point towards the steady continuance of just such labour as has already taught us all we know. Perhaps, indeed, in this complex of interpenetrating spirits our own effort is no individual, no transitory, thing. That which lies at the root of each of us lies at the root of the Cosmos too. Our struggle is the struggle of the Universe itself; and the very Godhead finds fulfilment through our upward-striving souls" (Myers, *Human Personality,* ii. p. 277).

To return to the problem of individual existence and to a more prosaic atmosphere. What we are claiming is no less than this—that, whereas it is certain that the present body cannot long exist without the soul, it is quite possible and indeed necessary for the soul to exist without the present body. We base this claim on the soul's manifest transcendence, on its genuine reality, and on the general law of the persistence of all real existence.

Recognition of the permanent element in man and of the probability of his individual survival,—that is to say, of the persistence of intelligence and memory after the destruction of the brain—if such recognition is to be of the greatest use to mankind, should be based on general considerations open and familiar to all, and be independent of special study with results verified by only a few. But if general

arguments are insufficient, and if the reader has patience with a more specific line of investigation, then I submit that the question can also be studied by the aid of observation and experiment, and that a conviction of persistence of personality can be strengthened by the record and discovery of specific facts.

Expression of Thought in Terms of Motion

The brain is definitely the link between the psychical and the physical, which in themselves belong to different orders of being. In the psychical region "thought" is the dominant reality; in the physical "motion." The bodily organism mysteriously enables one to be translated in terms of the other. Without some connecting mechanism, such as that afforded by brain, nerve, and muscle, the things we call intelligence and will however real, would be incapable of moving the smallest particle of matter. Now, since it is solely by moving matter that we can operate at all in the material world, or can make ourselves known to our fellows,—for in the last resort speech and writing and every action reduce themselves to muscular movement,—and since death inhibits this power, by breaking the link between soul and body, death naturally stops all manifestation, interrupts all intercourse, and so has been superficially thought to be the annihilation of the soul.

But such a conclusion is quite unwarranted. Existence need not make itself conspicuous: things are always difficult to discover when they make no impression on the senses; the human race is hardly yet

aware, for instance, of the Ether of space; and there may be a multitude of other things towards which it is in the same predicament.

Superficially, nothing is easier than to claim that just as when the brain is damaged the memory fails, so when the brain is destroyed the memory ceases. The reasoning is so plausible and obvious, so within reach of the meanest capacity, that those who use it against adversaries of any but the lowest intelligence might surely assume that it had already occurred to them and exhibited its weak point. The weak point in the argument is its tacit assumption that what is non-manifest is non-existent; that smoothing out the traces of guilt is equivalent to annihilating a crime; and that by destroying the mechanism of interaction between the spiritual and the material aspects of existence you must necessarily be destroying one or other of those aspects themselves.

The brain is our present organ of thought. Granted; but it does not follow that brain controls and dominates thought, that inspiration is a physiological process, or that every thinking creature in the universe must possess a brain. Really we know too little about the way the brain *thinks,* if it can properly be said to think at all, to be able to make any such assertion as that. We terrestrial animals are all as it were one family, and *our* hereditary links with the psychical universe consist of the physiological mechanism called brain and nerve. But these most interesting material structures are our servants, not our masters: we have to train them to serve our pur-

poses; and if one side of the brain is injured, the other side may be trained to act instead. Destroy certain parts of the brain completely, however, and connexion between the psychic and the material regions is for us severed. True; but cutting off or damaging communication is not the same as destroying or damaging the communicator: nor is smashing an organ equivalent to killing the organist. When the Atlantic cable broke, in 1858, intimate communication between England and America was destroyed; but that fact did not involve the destruction of either America or England. It appears to be necessary to emphasise this elementary matter, because the contrary contention is supposed to cut straight at the root of every kind of general argument for survival hitherto adduced.

But after all, it may be said, the above contention proves nothing either way; granted that breach of communication does not mean destruction of terminal stations, it leaves the question as to their persistence an open one. Yes, it does; it leaves persistence to be sustained by general arguments, such as those of the preceding chapter, which were directed to establishing the priority in essence of the spiritual to the material, of idea to bodily presentation; and to be supported by any kind of additional and special experience.

Argument from Telepathy

First of all, then, we must ask, are we quite sure that the breach of intercourse is as clear and definite

and complete as had been supposed? We have no glimmering conception of the process by which mental activity operates on the matter of the brain; so we cannot be sure that its influence is limited entirely to the brain material belonging to its own special organism. It may conceivably be able to affect other brains too, either directly, or indirectly through an immediate influence on the mind associated with them. Intelligent communication is normally carried on by means of conventional mechanical movements, calculated to set up special aerial or etherial tremors; which have to be apprehended through sense organs and brain, and interpreted back again into thought. But we are constrained to contemplate the possibility of a more direct method, and to ask, is there ever any direct psychical connection between mind and mind, irrespective of intermediate physical processes? It is a definite though difficult question, to be answered by experience. And an affirmative answer would suggest, among other things, that though individuality is dependent upon brain for physical manifestation, it may not be dependent on brain for psychical existence.

Such independence is difficult to prove directly, in a way convincing to those who approach the subject without previous study, or with prejudices against it; because in the proof, or to produce any recordable impression, a bodily organ—such as brain or muscle —*must* be used. We are not, and cannot be, completely independent of the body in this earth life: but we can bring forward facts which seem to indicate

an activity specially and peculiarly psychical, and only slightly physical. Of physical modes of communication between mind and mind there are many varieties: none of which do we really understand, beyond a knowledge of their physical details, though we are well accustomed to them all; but we know of one which appears not to be physical, save at its terminals, and which has the *appearance* of being, in its mode of transmission, exclusively psychical. That is to say, it occurs as if one mind operated directly either on another brain or on another mind across a distance (if *distance* has any meaning in such a case); or as if one mind exerted its influence on another through the conscious intervention of a third mind acting as messenger; or as if mental intercourse were effected unconsciously, through a general *nexus* of communication—a universal world-mind. All these hypotheses have been suggested at different times by the phenomenon of telepathy; and which of them is nearest the truth it is difficult to say. There are some who think that all are true, and that different means are employed at different times.

What we can assert is this, that the facts of "telepathy," and in a less degree of what is called "clairvoyance," must be regarded as practically established, in the minds of those who have studied them. There may be, indeed there is, still much doubt about the explanation to be attached to those facts; there is uncertainty as to their real meaning, and as to whether the idea half-suggested by the word "telepathy" is completely correct; but the facts them-

selves are too numerous and well authenticated to be doubted,—even if we except from our survey the directly experimental cases designed to test and bring to book this strange human faculty.

Thus telepathy opens a new chapter in science, and is of an importance that cannot be exaggerated. Even alone, it tends mightily to strengthen the argument for transcendence of mind over body, so that we may reasonably expect the one to be capable of existing independently and of surviving the other; though by itself, or in a discarnate condition, it is presumably unable to achieve anything directly on the physical plane. But telepathy is not all. Telepathy is indeed only the first link in a chain: there are further links, further stages on the road to scientific proof.

Arguments from Præternormal Psychology

Have we no facts to go upon, only speculation, concerning the actual persistence of individual memory and consciousness,—of much that characterises a personality—apart from a bodily vehicle? Facts we have; but they are not generally known, nor are they universally accepted: they have still, many of them, to run the gauntlet of scientific criticism even among the few students who take the trouble to study them. Their theory has been worked at pertinaciously, but it is still in a rudimentary stage, and by the mass of scientific men the whole subject is at present ignored, because it seems an elusive and disappointing inquiry, and because there are other fields which are easier of

cultivation and promise more immediate fertility.

The chief of the facts to which we can appeal belong to one of three marked regions:

First, experiences connected with genius, vision, and dream, extending up to premonition and clairvoyance,—the specially *psychological* region.

Second, the singular modification of bodily faculty sometimes experienced,—ranging from unusual extention of sensory and muscular powers, such as hyperæsthesia and what is technically known as automatism, up to various grades of what has been described as materialisation;—all which great group of asserted and controverted phenomena may be said to belong to the *physiological* region.

Third, the at first sight disconcerting facts connected with apparent changes, dislocations and disintegrations, of personality—what we may call the *pathological* region.

Concerning all this mass of information, not only is the theory far from distinct, but many of the facts themselves are only sparsely known: they belong to a special branch of study, which, conducted under many difficulties, cannot be properly apprehended at second hand.

Suffice it therefore to say, that whereas it is quite clear that *manifestation* of memory and consciousness, in a form capable of being appreciated by or demonstrated to us, is evidently not possible without

a material organism or body of some kind, yet—in the judgment of many students of the subject—a surviving memory or personality, even though discarnate, need not be utterly and completely prevented from still occasionally operating in our sphere.

For as it was possible for what, in Chapter VIII., we defined as "soul" to compose and employ an organ suited to itself, out of various kinds of nutriment, so also it appears to be possible, though not without difficulty and extraordinary trouble, for a discarnate entity or psychical unit occasionally to utilise a body constructed by some other similar "soul," and to make an attempt at communication and manifestation through that. It has even been conjectured that by special exertion of psychical power a temporary organ of materialisation can be constructed, presumably of organic particles, sufficient to enable some interaction between spirit and matter, and even to display some personal characteristics, through the utilisation of a form partially separate from, though also closely connected with, and as some think even borrowed from, the bodily organism of the auxiliary person known technically as the "medium" of communication, whose presence is certainly necessary. In favour of such an occurrence there is much evidence, some of it of a weak kind, some of it quite valueless; but again some of it is strong, evidenced by weighing, and vouched for by experienced naturalists and observers such as Dr. A. R. Wallace and Sir W. Crookes, as well as by the eminent physi-

ologist Professor Richet, and by Professors Schiaparelli, Lombroso, and other foreign men of science.

The idea here suggested is admittedly bizarre and at first sight absurd; nevertheless something of the kind has the appearance of being true, in spite of its having been discredited by much professional fraud exercised upon too willing dupes. The phenomenon on which it is based is at any rate a puzzling one, calling for further investigation: which must ultimately pursue it into a region quite apart from and beyond the obvious possibilities of fraud; that is to say, must not only establish it as a fact, if it be a fact, but must ascertain the laws which govern it.

Argument from Automatism

More frequently, however, a simpler method, akin to telepathy and to what is commonly known as inspiration or "possession," is employed; whereby some portion of the brain of "the automatist" appears to be operated upon directly, so as to produce intelligible statements, in speech or writing, often of considerable length and occasionally in unknown languages; —these messages being, at least in the cases where they are not merely subjective and of little interest, apparently irrespective of the ordinary consciousness, and only slightly sophisticated by the normal mental activity, of the person by whom this organ is usually wielded, and to whom it nominally "belongs."

The body, in fact, or some part of the body, though usually controlled and directed by the particular psychical agent which has composed and

grown accustomed to it, can sometimes be found capable of responding to a foreign intelligence, acting either telepathically through the mind or telergically by a more direct process straight on the brain. Sometimes the controlling intelligence belongs to a living person, as in cases of hypnotism; more usually it is an influence emanating from what we must consider some portion of the automatist's own larger or subliminal self. Occasionally a person appears able to respond to thoughts or stimuli embedded, as it were, among psycho-physical surroundings in a manner at present ill understood and almost incredible; —as if strong emotions could be unconsciously recorded in matter, so that the deposit shall thereafter affect a sufficiently sensitive organism, and cause similar emotions to reproduce themselves in its subconsciousness, in a manner analogous to the customary conscious interpretation of photographic or phonographic records, and indeed of pictures or music and artistic embodiment generally. And lastly, there are people who seem able to respond to a psychical agency apparently related to the surviving portion of intelligences now discarnate, in such a way as to suggest that the said intelligences are picking up the thread of their old thoughts, and entering into something like their old surroundings and their old feelings—though often only in a more or less dreamy and semi-entranced condition—for the purpose of conveying hallucinatory or other impressions to those who are still in the completely embodied state.

It would be a great mistake to assume, without

proof, that any given automatic message really emanates from the person to whom it is attributed; and such a generalisation applied to all so-called messages would be grotesquely untrue. But then neither should we be safe in maintaining that none of them have an authentic character, and that they are never in any degree what they purport to be. The elimination of the normal personality of the automatist, and the proof of the supposed communicator's identity, are singularly difficult; but in a few cases the evidence for identity is remarkably strong. The substance of the message and the kind of memory displayed in these cases belong not at all to the brain of the automatist, but clearly to the intelligence of the asserted control: of whose identity and special knowledge they are sometimes strongly characteristic. As to the elimination of normal personality, however, it must be admitted that, in all cases, the manner and accidents or accessories of the message are liable to be modified by the material instrument or organ through which the thought or idea is for our information reproduced. The reproduction of a thought in our world appears to demand distinct effort on the part of a transcendental thinker, and it seems to be almost a matter of indifference, or so to speak of accident not determined by the thinker, whether it make its appearance here in the form of speech or of writing, or whether it take the form of a work of art, or of unusual spiritual illumination. This is surely true of orthodox inspiration, as well as of what we are now conjecturing may perhaps be

an attempt at some additional method of arousing ideas in us. Moreover, in both cases, lucidity is only to be expected, and is only obtained, in flashes. The best of us only get flashes of genius now and then, and the experience is seldom unduly prolonged. Why should we expect it to be otherwise?

There is another aspect of the matter that may be mentioned too. For most of the difficulty of intercommunication we ourselves must be held responsible. Our normal immersion in mundane affairs may be very sensible and practical, and is probably essential to earthly progress until our civilisation is rather more consolidated and developed, but it can hardly facilitate communion with another order of existence. Nor is it likely that we should be able to appreciate the intimate concerns of that other order, even if it were feasible to convey a detailed account of them.

It is true that messages are often vague and disappointing even when apparently genuine; untrue that they are invariably futile and useless and inappropriate,—such an assertion could only be made by people imperfectly acquainted with the facts. In certain cases it is quite clear that a bodily organism has been controlled by something other than its usual and normal intelligence, and in a few cases the identity of the control has been almost crucially established: though that is a matter to be dealt with more technically elsewhere.

Subliminal Faculty

The extension of faculty exhibited during some trance states has suggested that a similar enlargement of memory and consciousness may follow or accompany our departure from this life, and is partly responsible for the notion of the existence of a subliminal or normally unconscious portion of our total personality. On this subject I can conveniently refer to the summary contained in Myers' chapters on "Disintegrations of Personality" and on "Genius," in vol. i. of his *Human Personality*. This doctrine—*the theory* of a larger and permanent personality of which the conscious self is only a fraction in process of individualisation, the fraction being greater or less according to the magnitude of the individual,—this doctrine, as a working hypothesis, illuminates many obscure facts, and serves as a thread through an otherwise bewildering labyrinth. It removes a number of elementary stumbling-blocks which otherwise obstruct an attempt to realise vividly the incipient stages of personal existence; it accounts for the extraordinary rapidity with which the development of an individual proceeds; and it eases the theory of ordinary birth and death. It achieves all this as well as the office for which it was originally designed, namely, the elucidation of unusual experiences, such as those associated with dreams, premonitions, and prodigies of genius. Many great and universally recognised thinkers, Plato, Virgil, Kant, I think,[1]

[1] In justification of the inclusion of this name, the following may

and Wordsworth, all had room for an idea more or less of this kind; which indeed, in some form, is almost necessitated by a consideration of our habitually unconscious performance of organic function. Whatever it is that controls our physiological mechanism, it is certainly not our own consciousness; nor is it any part of our recognised and obvious personality.

"We feel that we are greater than we know."

Our present state may be likened to that of the hulls of ships submerged in a dim ocean among many strange beasts, propelled in a blind manner through space; proud perhaps of accumulating many barnacles as decoration; only recognising our destination by bumping against the dock wall. With no cognisance of the deck and the cabins, the spars and the sails; no thought of the sextant and the compass and the captain; no perception of the lookout on the mast, of the distant horizon; no vision of objects far ahead, dangers to be avoided, destinations to be reached, other ships to be spoken with by other means than bodily contact;—a region of sunshine and cloud, of space, of perception, and of intelligence, utterly inaccessible to the parts below the water-line.

To suppose that we know and understand the universe, to suppose that we have grasped its main outlines, that we realise pretty completely not only what is in it, but the still more stupendous problem of what

suffice as an example: "For if we should see things and ourselves as they are, we would see ourselves in a world of spiritual natures with which our entire real relation neither began at birth nor ended with the body's death."—KANT, quoted by HEINZE.

is not and cannot be in it—as do some of our gnostic (self-styled "agnostic") friends—is a presumptuous exercise of limited intelligence, only possible to a certain very practical and useful order of brain, which has good solid work of a commonplace kind to do in the world, and has been restricted in its outlook, let us say by Providence, in order that it may do that one thing and do it well.

And just as we fail to grasp the universe so do we fail as yet to know ourselves: the part of which we have become aware, the part which manifestly governs our planetary life, is probably far from being the whole.[1] The assumption that the true self is complex, and that a larger range of memory may ultimately be attained, is justified by the researches of alienists, and mental physicians generally, into those curious pathological cases of "strata of memory" or dislocations of personality, on which many medical books and papers are available for the student. In cases of multiple personality, the patients, when in the ordinary or normally conscious state, are usually ignorant of what has happened in the intervening pe-

[1] Such an admission is quite consistent with recognition of the momentous character of this present stage of existence, not only while it lasts, but as influencing, and contributing in every sense to, the future; the doctrine of the subliminal self throws no sort of contempt or discouragement on the things which really ought to interest us here and now. There is "danger of losing sight of the ideal in our immediate life, and thinking that it is to be found only in the past or in the future," says Professor Caird; whereas our little struggle is part of the great conflict of good and evil in the universe, and we should be encouraged were we to "realise that our life is not an aimless or meaningless vicissitude of events, but an essential step in the great process."

riods when they were not in that state, and are not aware of what they have done when in one of the deeper states; but as soon as the personality has entered an ultra-normal condition, it is often found to be aware, not only of its previous actions when in that condition, but also of what was felt and known while at the ordinary grade of intelligence.

The analogy pointed to is that whereas we living men and women, while associated with this mortal organism, are ignorant of whatever experience our larger selves may have gone through in the past—yet when we wake out of this present materialised condition, and enter the region of larger consciousness, we may gradually realise in what a curious though legitimate condition of ignorance we now are; and may become aware of our fuller possession, with all that has happened here and now fully remembered and incorporated as an additional experience into the wide range of knowledge which that larger entity must have accumulated since its intelligence and memory began. The transition called death may thus be an awaking rather than a sleeping; it may be that we, still involved in mortal coil, are in the more dream-like and unreal condition:

> "Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
> He hath awakened from the dream of life—
> 'Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep
> With phantoms an unprofitable strife."
>
> (Shelley's "Adonais.")

The ideas thus briefly indicated have been suggested by a mass of unfamiliar experience, upon

which it is legitimate to speculate, though quite illegitimate to dogmatise; but in case they seem too fanciful to serve as any part of a basis for human immortality, it may be well to show how clearly the possibility of a larger and fuller existence than the present is indicated by facts with which we are all familiar.

Argument from Genius

It must be apparent how few of our faculties can really be accounted for by the need of sustenance and by the struggle for existence; and how those necessary faculties and powers naturally assume an overweening importance here and now, from the fact that they are so specially fitted to our present surroundings. So that the less immediately practical mental and spiritual characteristics can be spoken of by anthropologists as if they were of the nature of sports and by-products, not in the direct line of evolutional advance.

But, says Myers:

"The faculties which befit the material environment have absolutely no primacy, unless it be of the merely chronological kind, over those faculties which science has often called *by-products,* because they have no manifest tendency to aid their possessor in the struggle for existence in a material world. The higher gifts of genius—poetry, the plastic arts, music, philosophy, pure mathematics—all of these are precisely as much in the central stream of evolution—are perceptions of new truth and powers of new action just

as decisively predestined for the race of man—as the aboriginal Australian's faculty for throwing a boomerang or for swarming up a tree for grubs. There is, then, about those loftier interests nothing exotic, nothing accidental; they are an intrinsic part of that ever-evolving response to our surroundings which forms not only the planetary but the cosmic history of all our race."

We can regard these higher faculties, these inspirations of genius and the like, not only as contributing to our best moments now, but as forecasts or indications of something still more specially appropriate to our surroundings in the future—anticipations of worlds not realised—rudiments of what will develop more fully hereafter; so that their apparent incongruousness and occasional inconvenience, under present mundane conditions, are quite natural. Ultimately they may be found to be nearer to the heart of things than the attributes which are successful in the stage to which this world has at present attained; though they can only exhibit their full meaning and attain their full development in a higher condition of existence,—whether that be found by the race on this planet or by the individual in a life to come.

"An often-quoted analogy has here a closer application than is commonly apprehended. The grub comes from the egg laid by a winged insect, and a winged insect it must itself become; but meantime it must for the sake of its own nurture and preservation acquire certain larval characters—characters

sometimes so complex that the observer may be excused for mistaking that larva for a perfect insect destined for no further change save death. Such larval characters acquired to meet the risks of a temporary environment, I seem to see in man's earthly strength and glory. In these I see the human analogues of the poisonous tufts which choke the captor —the attitudes of mimicry which suggest an absent sting—the 'death's head' coloration which disconcerts a stronger foe."

For the triumphs of natural selection, then, we must look not to the spiritual faculties and endowments of the race, but to the businesslike masterfulness which makes one man a conqueror and another a millionaire. These we can regard as larval characters, of special service in the present stage of existence, but destined to be discarded, or modified almost out of recognition, in proportion as a higher state is attained. This I take to be the deep meaning of the Gospel sentence beginning "How hardly!"

But to continue Myers' biological parable:

"Meantime the adaptation to aerial life is going on; something of the imago or perfect insect is performed within the grub; and in some species, even before they sink into their transitional slumber the rudiments of wings still helpless protrude awkwardly beneath the larval skin. Those who call Shelley, for instance, 'a beautiful but ineffectual angel beating his wings in the void,' may adopt, if they choose, this homelier but exacter parallel. Shelley's special gifts

were no more by-products of Shelley's digestive system than the wings are by-products of the grub" (Myers, i. p. 97).

The meaning, you see, is that they *are* in the direct line of evolution, when the whole of existence is taken into account; and that similarly in the evolution of genius we are watching the emergence of unguessed potentialities from the primal germ,—the first revealings

> "Of faculties, displayed in vain, but born
> To prosper in some better sphere."
> (Browning's "Paracelsus.")

Moreover, what is true for the individual must be true also in some measure for the race. Embryology teaches us that each organism rapidly recapitulates or epitomises, amid how different conditions, its ancestral past history. It is legitimate to extend the same idea to the future, and to regard the progress of the individual and the progress of the race as in some degree concurrent; since their potentialities are similar, though their surroundings will be different. This argument, so far as I know, is novel, but not undeserving of attention.

Argument from Mental Pathology

And as to the disintegrations of personality,—the painful defects of will, the lapses of memory, the losses of sensation—such as are manifested by the hysteric patients of the Salpêtrière and other hospitals,—the lesson to be learnt from those pathological cases is not one of despair at the weaknesses and

ghastly imperfections possible to humanity; rather, on this view, it is one of hope and inspiration. For they point to the possibility that our present condition may be as much below an attainable standard as the condition of these poor patients is below what by a natural convention we have agreed to regard as the "normal" state. We might indeed feel bound to regard it not only as normal but as ultimate, were it not that some specimens of our race have already transcended it, have shown that genius, almost superhuman, is possible to man, and have thereby foreshadowed the existence of a larger personality for us all. Nay, they have done more,—for in thus realising in the flesh some of the less accessible of human attributes, they have become the first-fruits of a brotherhood higher than the human; we may hail them as the forerunners of a nobler race. Such a race, I venture to predict, will yet come into existence, not only in the vista of what may seem to some of us an unattractive and unsubstantial future, but here in the sunshine on this planet Earth.

> "Prognostics told
> Man's near approach; so in man's self arise
> August anticipations, symbols, types
> Of a dim splendour ever on before."

For as the hysteric stands in comparison with us ordinary men, so perhaps do we ordinary men stand in comparison with a not impossible ideal of faculty and of self-control. "Might not," says Myers, "all the historic tale be told, *mutato nomine,* of the whole race of mortal men? What assurance have we that

from some point of higher vision we men are not as these shrunken and shadowed souls? Suppose that we had all been a community of hysterics, all of us together subject to these shifting losses of sensation, these inexplicable gaps of memory, these sudden defects and paralyses of movement and of will. Assuredly we should soon have argued that our actual powers were all with which the human organism was or could be endowed. . . . Nay, if we had been a populace of hysterics we should have acquiesced in our hysteria. We should have pushed aside as a fantastic enthusiast the fellow-sufferer who strove to tell us that this was not all that we were meant to be. As we now stand,—each one of us *totus, teres, atque rotundus* in his own esteem,—we see at least how cowardly would have been that contentment, how vast the ignored possibilities, the forgotten hope. Yet who assures us that even here and now we have developed into the full height and scope of our being? A moment comes when the most beclouded of these hysterics has a glimpse of the truth. A moment comes when, after a profound slumber, she wakes into an *instant clair*—a flash of full perception, which shows her as solid, vivid realities all that she has in her bewilderment been apprehending phantasmally as a dream. . . . Is there for us also any possibility of a like resurrection into reality and day? Is there for us any sleep so deep that waking from it after the likeness of perfect man we shall be satisfied; and shall see face to face; and shall know even as also we are known?"

Whatever may be the answer to this question, it is undoubtedly true now—and that it is true is largely owing to him and his co-workers—that "these disturbances of personality are no longer for us—as they were even for the last generation—mere empty marvels, which the old-fashioned sceptic would often plume himself on refusing to believe. On the contrary, they are beginning to be recognised as psychopathological problems of the utmost interest;—no one of them exactly like another, and no one of them without some possible *apercu* into the intimate structure of man."

Religious Objections

Whatever objections to the above argument may be adduced from the side of science—and there are sure to be many, for free criticism is its natural atmosphere,—there is one from the side of religion—more often felt than expressed perhaps—which I must in conclusion briefly notice:

Objection is sometimes taken against any attempt being made gradually to arrive at what in process of time may come to be regarded as a scientific proof of such a thing as immortality; on the ground that it is an encroachment on the region of faith, a presumptuous interference with what ought to be treated as the territory of religion alone.

To meet these objectors on their own ground, they might be reminded of such texts as 2 Pet. i. 5, Prov. xxv. 2, as well as of the still more authoritative encouragement to investigation contained in Luke xi.

9 and in 1 John i. 5; the latter, or indeed both, being an expression of the basal postulate of the man of science, namely, the ultimate intelligibility of the Universe.

But, after all, an objection of this kind can only be felt, first by those who think that knowledge is the enemy of belief, instead of its strengthener and supporter, and second by those who unconsciously fear that the domain of religion is finite, and who therefore resent encroachments as diminishing its already too restricted area. It cannot be felt by people who realise that the dominion of religion is unlimited, and that there is infinite scope for faith, however far knowledge—real and accurate scientific knowledge—extends its boundaries. The enlargement of those boundaries is all gain; for thus the one area is increased while the other is not diminished. Infinity cannot be diminished by subtraction. No such objection to the spread of knowledge was felt by that inspired writer who hoped for the time when "the earth shall be full of the *knowledge* of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Whatever science *can* establish, that it has a right to establish: more than a right, it has a duty. Whatever science can examine into, that it has a right to examine into. If there be things which we are not intended to know, be assured that we shall never know them: we shall not know enough about them even to ask a question or start an inquiry. The intention of the universe is not going to be frustrated by the insignificant efforts of its own creatures. If

we refrain from examination and inquiry, for no better reason than the fanciful notion that perhaps we may be trespassing on forbidden ground, such hesitation argues a pitiful lack of faith in the goodwill and friendliness and power of the forces that make for righteousness.

Let us study all the facts that are open to us, with a trusting and an open mind; with care and candour testing all our provisional hypotheses, and with slow and cautious verification making good our steps as we proceed. Thus may we hope to reach out farther and ever farther into the unknown; sure that as we grope in the darkness we shall encounter no clammy horror, but shall receive an assistance and sympathy which it is legitimate to symbolise as a clasp from the hand of Christ himself.

SECTION IV—SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER X

SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS THE RE-INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

I

NOW that religion is becoming so much more real, is being born again in the spirit of modern criticism and scientific knowledge, may it not be well to ask whether the formal statement of some of the doctrines which we have inherited from mediæval and still earlier times cannot be wisely and inoffensively modified? There is usually some sort of forced sense in which almost any statement can be judged to have in it an element of truth, especially a statement which embodies the beliefs of many generations. But when the element of truth is quite other than had been supposed, and when the original statement has to be tortured in order to display it, it may be time to consider whether without harm its mode of expression can be reconsidered and redrafted,—to the ultimate benefit indeed of that religion of truth and clearness which we all seek to attain.

No doubt the crudity of popular statements of doctrine is recognised by many modern theologians and experts, who have travelled far beyond the original intention and superficial interpretation of their creeds and formularies; and these may be ready and anxious for revision, although their responsible ut-

terances on fundamental subjects are duly restrained and cautious, lest they offend the ignorant whose minds are not yet ripe. In that case it may be permissible for laymen to show that they at least are ready for a doctrinal revision—a kind of stocktaking such as is necessary from time to time in all living and expanding subjects, and is especially necessary now after a century of notable advance in natural knowledge.

It may be objected that revision of religious formulæ is no concern of mine; and there is force in the retort. I find that I have said below that harm is liable to dog the footsteps of a well-meaning fanatic or a blatant fool. Possibly it is in something akin to the spirit of the fanatic that I take the risk of entering upon what may prove a thorny path, though I earnestly trust that very little pain to others need accrue from any errors of mine.

Consider, then, the doctrine of the Atonement, and let us ask whether the expression of that doctrine traditionally and officially held or supposed to be held by the churches to-day is satisfactory.

In days when the vicariousness of sin could be accepted, and when an original fall of Adam could be held as imputed to the race, it was natural to admit the possibility of a vicarious punishment and to accept an imputed righteousness. In the days when God could be thought of as an angry Jehovah who sent pestilences until He was propitiated by the smell of a burnt-offering, it was possible to imagine that

the just anger of an offended God could be met by the sacrifice of an innocent victim.

The fall of man and the redemption by blood therefore in a measure go together, and may be said to constitute the backbone of Evangelical Christianity, which in some of its crude and revivalistic forms always lays great stress upon blood and its potent redeeming efficacy.

But all this is much older than Christianity; and it is clarifying to realise how these strange doctrines, preached even at this day, represent a survival of religious beliefs held five or six centuries before the Christian era.

In those admirable translations of Euripides with which Professor Gilbert Murray has delighted the heart not only of scholars but of at least one student of science, we find in his notes on *The Bacchæ* the following passages:

"A curious relic of primitive superstition and cruelty remained firmly embedded in Orphism—a doctrine irrational and unintelligible, and for that very reason wrapped in the deepest and most sacred mystery: a belief in the sacrifice of Dionysus himself, and the purification of man by his blood.

"It seems possible that the savage Thracians, in the fury of their worship on the mountains, when they were possessed by the god and became 'wild beasts,' actually tore with their teeth and hands any hares, goats, fawns, or the like that they came across. There survives a constant tradition of inspired Bacchanals in their miraculous strength tearing even bulls

asunder—a feat, happily, beyond the bounds of human possibility. The wild beast that tore was, of course, the savage god himself. And by one of these curious confusions of thought, which seem so inconceivable to us and so absolutely natural and obvious to primitive men, the beast torn was also the god! The Orphic congregations of later times, in their most holy gatherings, solemnly partook of the blood of a bull, which was, by a mystery, the blood of Dionysus Zagreus himself, the 'Bull of God,' slain in sacrifice for the purification of man.

. . . . . .

"It is noteworthy, and throws much light on the spirit of Orphism, that, apart from this sacramental tasting of the blood, the Orphic worshipper held it an abomination to eat the flesh of animals at all. . . . It fascinated him just because it was so incredibly primitive and uncanny; because it was a mystery which transcended reason!"[1]

Professor Murray seems to think it hard for a modern to contemplate the victim and the priest as in any sense one person, but orthodox religious people will experience no difficulty, as is evidenced by the line they are accustomed to sing:

"Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest,"

which, it must be admitted, forms a curious parallel; though the meaning is simple and legitimate enough,

[1] Mr. L. P. Jacks has called my attention to an interesting article on a similar subject, by Dr. Farnell, in the *Hibbert Journal*.

namely, that the sacrifice is voluntary: else, indeed were it mere execution. But a few strange hymns are more worthy of the worship of Dionysus, at least in some of its older and more primitive and purer forms, than of a place in a church-service (A. & M.) collection of to-day. These hymns emphasise, for the edification of the laity, the more barbarous concomitants of sacrificial and vicarious redemption, by blood drawn from and pain inflicted on an innocent victim who is likewise a god.

Sometimes the blood is represented as being used for cleansing purposes:

"Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood."

Sometimes it is described as a vivifying draught:

"May those precious fountains
Drink to thirsty souls afford;"

but pagan precedents are closely followed, and pagan survival is clear.

The idea of sacrificial suffering judicially self-inflicted by a widely vengeful Deity is an essential element in popular theology:

"He, Who once in righteous vengeance
Whelmed the world beneath the flood,
Once again in mercy cleansed it
With His own most precious Blood,
Coming from His throne on high
On the painful Cross to die.

"We were sinners doomed to die;
Jesus paid the penalty."

It is more like a legal fiction or commercial transaction than a natural process.

"Scourged with unrelenting fury
For the sins which we deplore,
By His livid stripes He heals us,
Raising us to fall no more."

"Had Jesus never bled and died,
Then what could thee and all betide
But uttermost damnation?"

This sort of crude materialism naturally leads to a kind of idolatry:

"Faithful Cross, above all other,
One and only noble Tree,
None in foliage, none in blossom,
None in fruit thy peer may be;
Sweetest wood, and sweetest iron;
Sweetest weight is hung on thee.

"Thou alone wast counted worthy
This world's ransom to sustain,
That a shipwrecked race for ever
Might a port of refuge gain,
With the sacred Blood anointed
Of the Lamb for sinners slain."

Suppose, however, that the belief in the efficacy of sacrifice is old, and that our form of it has a long ancestry which may be traced: that need not undermine its essential truth; it will only mean that humanity had glimpses of truth earlier than the full revelation, and the familiar doctrine of "types" will be appealed to.

In certain beliefs, such as that of immortality, I should myself allow the argument to have weight,

and should not be unwilling to appeal to the antiquity of human tradition as tending in favour of some sort of truth underlying this perennial and protean faith; and so in the matter of vicarious punishment and bloody atonement by an innocent victim or by an incarnate god for the sins of humanity, if we could feel a real and helpful truth underlying it, we might admit that the antiquity of the tradition was even in its favour. But it cannot be that *all* religious creeds, without exception, which are inherited from barbarous times have a true ethical significance: some of them must surely be mistaken, and it becomes a question which of them we may retain and which we must gradually seek to emancipate ourselves from. I would not be in the least dogmatic in such a matter, but surely it is generally recognised that although the sufferings and violent death of Christ were natural consequences of His birth so far in advance of His age, and although the pity and terror of such a ghastly tragedy has a purifying and sacramental influence, yet we are now unable to detect in it anything of the nature of *punishment;* nor do we imagine for a moment that an angry God was appeased by it, and is consequently disposed to treat more lightly the sins of men here and now, or any otherwise than as they have always been treated by a constant, steadfast, persevering Universe.

Nor can we suppose that leaders of theologic thought are able to derive satisfaction from the more modern doctrine (perhaps, for all I know, a heresy) that it was not so much an infinite punishment as an

infinite repentance that was efficacious; so that, adequate repentance having been achieved once for all long ago, sinners have nothing further to do but to believe and acquiesce in it.

As a matter of fact, the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment. His mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing,[1] and in so far as he acts wrongly or unwisely he expects to suffer. He may unconsciously plead for mitigation on the ground of good intentions,[2] but never either consciously or unconsciously will anyone but a cur ask for the punishment to fall on someone else, nor rejoice if told that it already has so fallen.

As for "original sin" or "birth sin" or other notion of that kind, by which is partly meant the sin of his parents,—that sits asbolutely lightly on him. As a matter of fact it is non-existent, and no one but a monk could have invented it. Whatever it be it is not a business for which we are responsible. We did not make the world; and an attempt to punish us for our animal origin and ancestry would be simply comic, if anyone could be found who was willing to take it seriously.

Here we are; we have risen, as to our bodies, from the beasts; as a race the struggle has been severe, and there have been both rises and falls. We have been helped now and again by bright and shining individual examples—true incarnations of diviner spirits

[1] Matt. xxiv. 46, xii. 43. [2] Matt. xxv. 25.

than our own,—notably by one supremely bright Spirit who blazed out nineteen hundred years ago, and was speedily murdered by the representatives of that class whose mission it appears to be to wage war against the prophets, and to do their worst to exterminate new ideas and kinds of goodness to which they are not accustomed. Fortunately for the race, they are only able to kill the body; the soul, the inspiration, the germ of a new and higher faith, seems for ever beyond their grasp.

But now that orthodox people enthusiastically recognise his supreme goodness, they take steps to deny that he was effectively man,—only half man say some, only quarter man say others:[1] human only on one side they feel he must have been, else he could not have been so good, so wise, so patient. So the hope of a higher humanity is to be taken from us, in order that man's sins may be superhumanly atoned for and an angry God illogically appeased.

Well, well! demi-gods were common enough in those days. And again it may be said that the antiquity of the belief is to its credit, and that these tales of the gods[2] were but crude heraldings of a divine truth some day to be made clear.

But why, why, what is the good of it? Can a divine spirit not enter into a man born of two parents? Is divine inspiration to be limited to a being of ex-

[1] This is a reference to the doctrine concerning the supposed origin of the Virgin.

[2] Familiar to the Jews during their Babylonian captivity and the Roman conquest.

ceptional parentage? If we grant that it is a physiological condition towards or at which the race should aim,—if we suppose that some day we shall have one parent only, and that that is to be our apotheosis,—there would be meaning in it. In that case Christ would indeed be the first-fruits, and would represent some unknown possibility in our physical nature. But do people think that? And if not, what is the virtue of semi-parentage? If for a Divine Incarnation we admit human parentage at all, we may as well admit it altogether. If a taint is conveyed by inheritance from or dependence on human flesh—grossly built up by daily food of terrestrial materials and grossly cleared of refuse—that taint appertains not to fatherhood only, but to motherhood also; and the only way to avoid the imaginary stain is to postulate a being sprung like Pallas from the brain of Zeus—a pure embodiment of thought, a true psychological "conception." That Christ possessed a divine spirit in excess, to an extent unknown to us—that he was an embodiment of truly Divine attributes,[1] which as thus revealed we worship—may be willingly admitted; that he represents a standard or peak towards which humanity may try to aim, is a tenable and helpful creed; but that his body was abnormally produced, even if it be the fact, seems to give no assistance. I derive no sort of comfort or intellectual aid from an idea of that kind.

For what is virgin birth? merely a case of par-

[1] John xvi. 28, xvii. 4.

thenogenesis. It has been asserted perhaps erroneously, that X-rays have the power to produce parthenogenetic development in some lowly kinds of ova.[1] It is doubtless thinkable enough. I would not say it is impossible, but that it is ethically useless. The lowest organisms multiply by fission, sexual reproduction comes in later as an improved form; but it comes in very low down—as low down as the higher plants—and exists throughout the main animal kingdom. Possibly at some other stage, or by some other process, it may be dispensed with. If so, it will be a biological fact of scientific interest, and, if ever applicable to man, a development of astounding social significance, but nothing more. There is no virtue in multiplication by fission, any more than there is vice in multiplication by sex. Both are superlatively interesting facts, like many other facts of science, and no one can say that we understand the extraordinary truth that a gentle warmth applied for a certain time to a sparrow's egg will result in a live creature breaking forth, which had not existed before, endowed with power to live and feel and grow and propagate his kind to the third and fourth thousandth generation. For some reason—a wise and good social reason—mankind, living in a crowded state, has surrounded the multiplication process with ritual and emotion and fear. No doubt this is absolutely justifiable and right, and, by experience, necessary; but it may in some cases have gone too far; and it seems to

[1] *British Medical Journal*, 13th February 1904, p. 383.

me to go too far when it denies that a divine spirit can enter into any body except one that has been produced in an exceptional way. Whatever the mysterious phrase "Son of God" means, and it probably means something mighty and true, it cannot mean that. A belief in that is materialism run rampant.

And yet even materialism need not be a term of abuse; for if matter be the living garment of God,—as it certainly is the temporary raiment of man,—and if the Divine Spirit be immanent in everything that exists, I do not say that a glorified materialism may not enshrine some elements of truth, when properly understood; nor would I seek to deny the benefit of Sacraments, in spite of their curiously material character. But the vicarious expiation, the judicial punishment of the innocent, and the appeasement of an angry God, are surely now recognisable as savage inventions; though they have left their traces on surviving formulæ, which accordingly have to be explained away. And so likewise the superior virtue of a one-sided human origin, for any Redeemer or Exemplar of mankind, seems to me unworthy of a period of spiritual awakening, of a cleansing acceptance of the facts of nature, of a purification of the material universe by the recognised permeance of an immanent energising God, of whom we too are fragmentary, struggling, helpful portions.

II

What, then, are the Truths underlying the great mysteries connected with the appearance and work

of Christ? Here I approach the positive part of my task, entering a region already flooded with literature; yet must I not shrink from an attempt to supplement negative criticism by such provisional and tentative positive judgment as I have been able to form, from the scientific point of view—the only kind of judgment to which I am entitled,—concerning the underlying Realities. No justification of this course should be necessary, because a fine jewel only flashes the brighter when turned about so as to expose every facet to the light; so I proceed without hesitation, though as briefly as is consistent with intelligibility, to set them down:

1. Incarnation with Pre-existence.
2. Revelation or Discovery.
3. Continuity and persistent Influence.

The utterance of science on these heads is not loud and is not positive, but I claim that at least it is not negative. No science asserts that our personality will cease a quarter of a century hence, nor does any science assert that it began half a century ago. Spiritual existence "before all worlds" is a legitimate creed.

No science maintains that the whole of our personality is incarnate here and now: it is in fact beginning to surmise the contrary, and to suspect the existence of a larger transcendental individuality, with which men of genius are in touch more than ordinary men. We may be all partial incarnations of a larger self. Incarnation of a portion of a divine spirit therefore involves no scientific dislocation or contra-

diction, nor need it involve any material mechanism other than that to which we are accustomed.[1] For only the germ is derived from others; the body is built under the guidance of the indwelling, living, personal entity: it is adapted to and serves to display the features of that entity under the limitations and disabilities of a material aspect; as the epiphany of an artist's conception is restrained by the limitations of his medium, as well as by his lack of executive skill.

Granting, then, the advent of as lofty a Spirit as we can conceive,—perfectly human on the bodily side, with all that that implies, and perfectly Divine on the spiritual side, whatever that may mean,—what sort of result may be expected to follow?

Consider the position. Here is mankind, risen from the beasts, making gods in the likeness of its ancestors,—in something worse than its own likeness, —cruel, jealous, bloody gods, who order massacres of helpless non-combatants and cattle, the courts of whose temples and tabernacles are a shambles served by a greedy self-seeking priesthood and by professional religious people who play to a gallery.[2] Into such a world, that is to say, a world with these general characteristics, in spite of occasional bursts of brightness and much homely virtue, imagine the thorough incarnation of a truly Divine Spirit, and what would be the consequences?

The immediate consequences we know. On the part of the priests hostility and murder; on the part

[1] John i. 12–14; 1 John iii. 2.

[2] Matt. xxiii. 5.

of peasantry, curiosity growing into sympathy; on the part of a few earnest souls love and adoration. But what in the long-run would be the permanent consequences? Surely a discovery of the truer nature of God: one of the veils would be drawn aside from the face of Deity, and there would partially emerge, not Jehovah any more than Baal, but a Being whom it was possible to love, to serve, to worship; for whom it is possible to live and work, and, if need be, die. There would be the beginnings of a real at-one-ment between man and God.[1]

Observe that the influence exerted is exerted wholly on man. The attitude of God has changed no whit; there never was any hostility to be washed out in blood; He had felt no stupid wrath at the blind efforts, the risings and sinkings of men struggling in the mire from bestial to human attributes; there was nothing to appease. But there was plenty to reveal: an infinitude of compassion, an ideal of righteousness, the inevitableness of law, the hopelessness of rebellion,[2] the power of faith, the quenching of superstitious fear in filial love; a real and not a mechanical salvation, no legal quibble but a deep eternal truth. Let man but see the face of God, so far as it can be revealed in the flesh, and he will catch a glimpse of a Holy of Holies such as he had not conceived. The savage inventions of a jealous God who resents the worship of anything but himself, who thinks more of his own glory and dignity than of the creative work

[1] John xiv. 7; Mark xv. 38. [2] John xvi. 8.

of evolution, who arranges that if people do not theorise correctly here and now then they shall suffer eternal pain—all these ignorances fall into the region of blasphemous fables, henceforth to be promulgated by fanatics alone.

And yet let us be fair. The worship of Jehovah was based on a recognition of the majesty and sacredness of Law; an element nevermore to be destroyed. And as to punishment for wrong belief,—the notion of an eternal penalty attaching to discordance or dislocation between ourselves and the Universe of which we are a part is a true and luminous idea. When our beliefs are out of harmony with facts, when our theories are false, we are liable to act erroneously, and accordingly to suffer by conflict with inevitable law, even though we act in accordance with our faith, and so are not consciously wicked or infidel. The connexion between true theory and right action is real and close, although very likely the commonest faults of men are due less to wrong notions than to weak wills; but the sins due to wrong theory are liable to be much more really deadly[1]; there is no wickedness so violent as that organised by the fanatic who thinks he is doing God service, nor is there any harm worse than can follow the footsteps of a well-meaning blatant fool. And the penalty is in a sense eternal, that is to say æonic,[2] for it is incurable except by mental

[1] Matt. xxiii. 30, 34.

[2] There seems to be a popular idea abroad that the derivation of the word eternal signifies without end—I suppose from e and terminus—and that the word æonic is milder. But in truth they mean just the same; only one is the Latin and the other the Greek form. The supposed popular derivation is a false one.

and spiritual revolution. So long as wrong beliefs continue, so long there must be a sense of dislocation, a feeling of friction and of grit: the only remedy is to get right with the Universe. The sin and the damnation are co-eternal or co-æonal.

The law thus stated is no theologic dogma, it results from no arbitrary *fiat*, it is the commonplace expression of a natural fact. It is exemplified in the running of every piece of human machinery, and in the working of our own bodies. Anything out of gear is a source of disquiet, of inefficiency, and of pain; health and happiness result from a restoration of harmony.

How the grit got into the cosmic organism may be a hard question; perhaps it has never yet been out. This may be a narrow, temporal way of conceiving the matter—but let it pass for the present. Anyhow we could not have become what we are without it; and the word "grit" has acquired a forcible psychic connotation. After all, grit is only matter out of place; it has no intrinsic or absolute quality. Whether it exists for good or for ill, we did not put it there; though it is our privilege to help to remove it. We are the artisans of creation, at least in this outlying planetary district, and a magnificent co-operation is our highest privilege.[1]

Almost every widespread doctrine has a meaning and enshrines a truth, visible when freed from its blasphemous accretions; and the doctrine of æonic

[1] John v. 17.

damnation, even as too specifically interpreted by Athanasius, is a glimpse of the truth that whosoever will enter into the joy of the Lord must endeavour to understand rightly the cosmic scheme,[1] and that except a man get into harmony with Truth and Reality he cannot ascend to the destiny in store for him—He cannot be "saved."

In the same way a germ of truth can be detected in that persistent element of popular theology, the idea of sacrificial suffering, self-inflicted. There *must* be such a germ, else the belief could not have proved itself of such "saving" power;—and even the current crudities of expression may have had their use, in the recent transitional age of the earth's history—the geological epoch during which the evolution of man has been beginning—that uneducated age out of which we cannot yet be said to have emerged. The essence of truth contained in it would appear to be that the responsible task of evolution from animal to higher man, the struggle *humanam condere gentem,* could not be undertaken and carried through even by Deity without grievous suffering and agonising patience [2]; and this sympathetic shudder through the whole of Existence might well be parabolically expressed in terms of current altruistic sacrificial legend. Subject to proper interpretation, the legend has a meaning: the mistake lay in imagining it an expiatory transaction, instead of a natural and necessary process, quite unlike the alternate moods of fury and affection sometimes exhibited by a chief to slaves.

[1] Matt. xxii. 11. [2] Rom. viii. 22.

It was not a *bare* necessary and natural process, however; the aspects of Deity are so infinite that they cannot be grasped simultaneously. The personal aspect is as vivid as any of the others[1] and, from this point of view, the genuineness of Divine suffering, no matter how inevitable,[2] has always been recognised as a revelation of Divine and Fatherly love.

The redeeming and elevating efficacy of such a conviction is manifest. The perception of something in the Universe which not only makes for righteousness, but which loves and sympathises in the process; and yet is no mere indiscriminate charity, weakly relieving man from the consequences of his blunders or stealthily undermining his powers of self-help, but a true benevolence, which healthily and strongly and if need be sternly convinces him that the path of duty is the path of joy,[3] that sacrifice and not selfishness is the road to the heights of existence,[4] that it is far better to suffer wrong than to do wrong:[5]—such a perception inevitably raises man far above "the yelp of the beast," "saves" him, saves him truly, from æons of degradation, and enables him to "stand on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher."

Selfishness long continued must lead to isolation and so to a sort of practical extinction:[6] it is like a

1 See Chapter II. § iv. above.
2 Luke xv. 4.
3 Matt. xxv. 21, 30.
4 Matt. xvi. 25; John xii. 32.
5 Plato, *Gorgias* 469, conversation with Polus; and elsewhere.
6 *Cecilia de Noël,* by Lanoe Falconer.

disintegrating or repulsive force in the material cosmos, while love is like a cohesive and constructive force. All this is no new doctrine, thank goodness! it has been preached and practised by the prophets and saints of the human race for generations—by some mighty ones even before the advent of Jesus of Nazareth. For that love is the quickening force of the spiritual universe, and that its fruition would lead to super-humanity, had been clearly stated before it was in the Fourth Gospel supremely emphasised; and the words put by the Socrates of Plato into the mouth of Diotima the prophetess of Mantineia [1] have a deep and growing meaning for those who have ears to hear.

A discovery once made by the human race is permanent: it fades no more, and its influence grows from age to age. We are now beginning to realise a further stage in the process of atonement; we are rising to the conviction that we are a part of nature, and so a part of God; that the whole creation—the One and the Many and All-One—is travailing together towards some great end; and that now, after ages of development, we have at length become conscious portions of the great scheme, and can co-operate in it with knowledge and with joy. We are no aliens in a stranger universe governed by an outside God; we are parts of a developing whole, all enfolded in an embracing and interpenetrating love, of which we too, each to other, sometimes experience the joy too deep

[1] *Symposium*, 191–212. Best translation in Myers' *Human Personality*, vol. i. p. 113.

for words. And this strengthening vision, this sense of union with Divinity, this, and not anything artificial or legal or commercial, is what science will some day tell us is the inner meaning of the Redemption of Man.

CHAPTER XI

SIN, SUFFERING AND WRATH

IN the last chapter certain great topics were dealt with so briefly that if left without amplification they may give rise to misunderstanding; indeed their treatment has already aroused some criticism, notably an extremely friendly comment by Dr. Talbot, now Bishop of Southwark, published in the *Hibbert Journal,* wherein, while criticising judicially, he nevertheless holds out a hand of welcome.

This article was replied to sufficiently in the succeeding number of the *Hibbert Journal,* and not much of my reply need be here reproduced.

I will only say that whereas in the greater part of the present book, and indeed of my writings generally, the mode of treatment aims at being positive rather than negative—seeking to construct rather than to destroy, and hoping to replace error quietly by substitution of truth—the last chapter does to some extent take a negative or destructive attitude and accordingly demands extremely careful treatment.

I do not conceive of myself, however, as attacking Theology or Theological doctrine: I discern an element of truth in nearly every doctrine, perhaps in quite every doctrine which the human race has been

able to believe for a long period; but I am seeking to scrutinise more closely, and if possible display to greater advantage, that side of those doctrines which faces us across the frontier of our scientific territory. This side has been less efficiently attended to by the builders than the façade devoted to edification; and some or our own outworks approach so near to the Theological position on its more prosaic side, that an occasional raid, inspired by admiration and conducted with reverence, may be pardoned.

It looks to me as if part of the building were needlessly obscured by coatings and stucco and excrescences, once thought ornamental. Perhaps this extraneous matter had the useful effect of protecting the building through times of ignorance and violence, but some of it is now seen to be little better than disfigurement and crudity, hiding the beautiful structure beneath; it was this extraneous matter alone that I intended to attack in my last chapter.

But in this legitimate restoration work at the present day a number of operatives are engaged; some doing their occasional best from outside, like myself, others, as regular workmen acting from within, like Dr. Talbot. With his scheme of the structure, as seen from his point of view and stated in the *Hibbert Journal,* I have extremely little cause to disagree. He is one of the many whom I referred to as having already emancipated themselves from errors of the past to a large extent; and if it still seems to me that here and there in his statement traces of crudeness remain, who am I that I should suppose

myself capable of infallibly detecting and evaluating all forms of crudity?

I notice that Professor Masterman admits the crudity of ordinary statements of Christian doctrine, but justifies it as necessary to catch the attention of ignorant laymen, who are accustomed to speak in terms of "blood." I think it possible for the clergy to over-estimate the crudity and ignorance of the laity. A professional jargon is apt to be employed which by habit may sound appropriate on Sundays, but does not represent the mental attitude of anyone at other times. Perhaps spirit and character once resided in the blood, as compassion in the bowels, virulence in the spleen, love in the heart, and other emotions in other viscera, but few persons imagine that they live there now. I say nothing against the methods of the Salvation Army in its own sphere of activity: these may be justified by their results. I somewhat doubt whether ordinary Church procedure is so justified.

I suggest that it is not wise to assume too invincible an ignorance on the part of habitual worshippers. It may, for instance, be of doubtful wisdom to withdraw documents from common use on this ground alone, and at the same time to suggest that nevertheless they convey essential truth to clerics instructed in refinements of interpretation; it is rather too suggestive of the attitude of the priests in John vii. 49. The really learned in theology are respected by all, but they are infrequently encountered. It would be fairer to admit that some of the documents in use

are themselves imperfect and antiquated, that they have been in many respects outgrown, and that truth as now perceived can now be more clearly expressed. But I refrain from any more ecclesiastical suggestions.

Perhaps, however, I may unobtrusively remark that such expressions as righteous vengeance, angry Father, wrathful Lamb, do not seem satisfactory forms whereby to represent what the Bishop well calls "a stately and austere conception of order." Nor is it likely that "the bright front and buoyant tread of early discipleship" arose from anything so negative as sin overcome: it was not that which animated the Apostles; and though it certainly contributed to the inspiration of the Magdalene, we should hardly speak of "bright front and buoyant tread" in her case.

Something more positive is needed to explain any living and energising enthusiasm. The incidental treatment of sin in Chapter X. is, however, one of the points on which further explanation is certainly desirable; and all the supplementary points I now propose to deal with may be grouped under four heads as follows:

1. That evolutionary treatment of sin is apt to minimise unduly the sense of sinfulness.

2. That it is misleading to deny the revealed Wrath of the Holy One against sin.

3. That heresy lurks in any non-professional treatment of the relation between the Humanity and Divinity of Christ.

4. That while controverting the notion of vicarious punishment, the true significance of the doctrine of a vicarious Atonement may be missed.

Let us take these points in order.

1. On page 204 above the following sentence occurs:

"As a matter of fact the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment: his mission if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing."

When writing these words I was well aware that they laid me open to a retort based upon John ix. 41; nevertheless the statement seems to me true "as a matter of fact," provided by "higher men" are understood leaders in the world's activity, whether they are working in the public eye or in the study or in the office, or anywhere save in the cloister. Perhaps when so put it will be granted, merely as a matter of fact, if saints are excluded, and if no moral judgment in favour of the thesis is claimed or supposed to be involved in the statement. But it will be contended that more than a matter of fact was implied in that sentence, that there was an element of judgment also, and that it was one of approbation: that the epithet "higher" signified that a man who was up and doing, instead of introspecting and mourning over his sins, was in the path of progress, and was to be praised rather than blamed. Undoubtedly I did mean that too; and in order implicitly to justify that attitude, without presumption and without tedious contention,

I gave two Biblical references — one to Matt. xxiv. 46, where the "servant who is found so doing" is authoritatively "blessed," and the other to the warning contained in Matt. xii. 43, that apologue about the fate of a house which was left unoccupied after having been cleansed and decorated.

It may surely without unorthodoxy be held that there are two ways of overcoming sin and sinful tendencies: one the direct way, of concentrating attention on them with brooding and lamentation; the other the indirect and, as I think, the safer and more efficacious and altogether more profitable way, of putting in so many hours' work per day, and of excluding weeds from the garden by energetic cultivation of healthy plants.

It will be said that brooding and lamentation is not a fit description of the exercises of religion, that a safeguard of a higher order than any terrestrial occupation can be secured by conscious emotional penitence and aspiration. It may be so; but it is not quite certain. The following sonnet may or may not be good poetry, but it would appear to embody, in exaggerated and feminine form, a phase of experience not unfamiliar to the ordinary human soul:

"A soul of many longings entered late
A chapel like a jewel blazing bright,
And fell upon the altar steps. All night
She held with hopes and agonies debate;
With tears the litanies love-passionate
Drenched her; triumphant colours burned her white;
And, as the incense flamed in silver light,
God sealed her to His own novitiate.

"And then, because her eyes were charmed with peace,
And blinded by the stars new-born within
The lit sweet lids God's dreams had loverèd,—
Nine paces from that House of Ecstasies
Her feet were taken in the snares of sin;
And, ere the morning quickened, she was dead." [1]

We must all of us have known what it is to be compelled to say, not always, nor often, it is to be hoped, —it is as stupid to exaggerate in these as in any other matters,—but occasionally in the course of our lives, or even constantly in connexion with some minor ingrained habit which we should like to overcome,

"Video meliora, proboque,
Deteriora sequor."

And this doing not what we see to be best, but something inferior which we do not really approve or will to do, is what constitutes one aspect of sin. Plato, indeed, argues in the *Gorgias* that a wicked man is not really obeying his own will, that he is enslaved and acting contrary to his true self; but whether that be so or not, few of us have the spirit to be wilful sinners. Wilful sin is, as has been often said, rebellion and lawlessness, the misuse and misapplication of natural powers; it is akin to dirt, to disease, to weeds—*i.e.* to matter and cells and plants out of place, and working harm instead of good. It is like a fire escaped from control and consuming instead of serving. Even so a banked-up lake constructed for the water-supply of a city, if it burst its embankment, may whelm villages in flood.

[1] One of Rachael Annand Taylor's poems, called "The Vanity of Vows," quoted in the *Times* Literary Supplement for 15th April 1904.

Our business is to restrain and control, to direct and guide, the forces of nature and our own forces. The man of vigorous sin, rightly trained and directed, may become the man of wholesome energy. There is some valuable material being wasted in our prisons: unreclaimed soil festering for lack of plough and harrow. Good men of small and restrained activity may not constitute the most efficient or the most approved instruments of progress. The ascetic may endeavour to avoid all danger, by never making a mountain lake, by never lighting a fire, by never going to sea, by running no risks and living a poverty-stricken existence; and may succumb after all: as soldiers may be economised in war till they fall victims to some miserably ignominious disease. We are called upon rather for full exercise of all our powers, for full vigour of life, but subject to discipline and reason and restraint. What we call vices and virtues are compounded of very similar vital forces: their character is dependent on the direction we give them. Every activity can be deflected from the vicious into the virtuous direction; and an unsought joy is the reward.

While dealing with these everyday considerations, it is desirable to avoid misconception by explicitly making the admission that doubtless there is a sense in which radical imperfection can be predicated of the whole human race without exception: the sense in which the heavens can be said to be unclean and the angels to be chargeable with folly; the sense in which Job, though able to rebut the charge of hidden wick-

edness brought by his friends, was willing abundantly to admit vileness when accosted by the Deity.

For devotional purposes this comparison of humanity with infinite Perfection and infinite attributes generally may be appropriate and useful, though no finite emendation can be effective against it; one would expect the feeling aroused by contemplation of Infinitude to be one of humility and abasement rather than one of contrition and penitence, but I admit that saints have found it otherwise, and that their experience is conclusive.

2. So much for practical and human considerations; but there is another and more important matter, on which explanation is needed, namely, where I contend that the sacrifice of Christ need not be regarded as expiatory, or as appeasing the righteous anger of a wrathful God, because (p. 211).—

"He had felt no wrath at the blind efforts, the risings and sinkings, of men struggling in the mire from bestial to human attributes—there was nothing to appease."

This has been attacked as unscriptural: "Angry with the wicked every day," "The wrath of the Lamb," and a multitude of familiar texts, can easily be quoted.

Very well, the epithet "unscriptural" has no coercive force unless the text appealed to carries with it a conviction of its own inspiration. There is plenty of "anger" in the Old Testament undoubtedly, but that is just where one would expect to find it on the sur-

vival hypothesis; and I doubt not the Prophets had plenty to make them angry.[1]

But it is scarcely worth while to waste time in discussing the relative authority of texts: every one must be aware that this is no rose-water world; the things that have happened in it, and the things that may yet happen in it, are appalling. We must admit the force of experiences which gave birth to ejaculations such as Luke xii. 5 and Hebrews x. 31, whoever may have been their author, and I am glad of the opportunity of enlarging upon this subject of sin and Divine anger somewhat; it was quite too briefly and superficially treated in Chapter X.: indeed it was not really dealt with at all.

It suited the priests to say that God was angry when a budding nation desired to have a king in order to weld it together. It suited them to say that he was angry when prisoners were taken captive instead of

[1] Of the two texts above quoted at random the first is from Psalm vii. 11, and the words "with the wicked" seem to be a gratuitous interpolation of the translators, an evident attempt to make intelligible the supposed sentence, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry every day." The Prayer Book version—more effective as usual—renders it thus, "God is a righteous Judge, strong and patient, and God is provoked every day"; which is doubtless as true as any statement of the kind can be.

"The wrath of the Lamb" occurs only in Revelation, so far as I know; and there also is to be found that hyperbole, intensified from Isaiah and from a common industry of the country, about the vintage of blood flowing "to the horse-bridles" from the trodden winepress of the wrath of God. The author's feelings are evidently overcharged. And if we had lived in times of really efficient persecution we too might have tried, less poetically, to assuage our indignant helplessness in the same sort of way.

being massacred; and again that he was wroth when the first census was contemplated.

So also in rather later times God was represented as angry with idolaters, not ostensibly because some special practices of idol-worship may have been debasing, but because he was "jealous." There are plenty of good reasons against idolatry among intelligent and "chosen" people, but this is not one of them: nor is it to be supposed that the stock of a tree is ever really worshipped, even when prostrated to. An idol, to ignorant and undeveloped people, is a symbol of something which they are really worshipping under a material form and embodiment: the sensuous presentation assists their infantile efforts towards abstract thought, as material sacraments help people in a higher stage of religious development. But some of these helps should be outgrown. An adult mathematician hardly needs a geometrical figure, crudely composed of fragments of chalk or smears of plumbago or ink, to help him to reason; and if he uses such a diagram he is aware that he is not really attending to it, but is reasoning about ideal and unrealisable perfections; he has soared above the symbol, and is away among the cementing laws of the universe.

If an image or a tree-trunk or other symbol helps a savage to meditate on some divine and intractable conception, if it has been so used by thousands of his ancestors, and has acquired a halo of reverence through antiquity and by the accumulation of human emotion lavished upon it,—a missionary should think twice

before he is rude to it, or abuses it or pulls it down. We do not rebuke a child for lavishing a wealth of nascent maternal affection on some grotesque black-Betty of a wooden rag-covered doll; we do not despise, we honour, a regiment content to be decimated so it may save its flag,—which materially is almost a nonentity. And so if we send missionaries, we should send competent men, who will gradually educate by implanting useful arts and positive virtues; and we should tell these messengers clearly that negative and iconoclastic teaching may be very cruel.

These things depend upon grade attained. It was very right for Hebrew prophets to feel indignant and to wax sarcastic when they saw the degenerate worship of a moderately enlightened people descending to the level of a grinning idol or the stock of a tree; and they may have rightly felt that to replace such symbols as these by the more advanced symbol of an angry and jealous God would be a spiritual help of the highest kind possible to a nation at such a stage of ethical development. In this manner the texts concerning anger and jealousy can be amply accounted for.

Moreover, like most other symbolism, they embody a real truth. Quite irrespective of texts in its favour, we may be willing to recognise Divine wrath as a real and terrible thing; though we must also be ready to admit that the gloom of religions antecedent to Christianity, and its own later struggle amid nascent civilisation, overshadowed the Gospel message unduly; and fear was a powerful weapon in the hands of

priests, which they did not fail to employ. But I feel no contradiction between all this and the above quotation from page 211. So far as I can judge, it is *not* likely that a Deity operating through a process of evolution can feel wrath at the blind efforts of his creatures struggling upward in the mire. I judge rather that the human impulse to lend them a pitiful and helpful hand can with difficulty be restrained, can indeed only be restrained by lofty and far-seeing Wisdom, and by perception of "the far-off interest of tears."

Nevertheless, I am sure that what may without irreverence be humanly spoken of as fierce Wrath against sin, and even against a certain class of sinner, is a Divine attribute. But, then, what do we mean by "sin" in this connection? It is a term which, in a different sense from charity, likewise covers a multitude. I do not wish to enter upon a dissertation on the nature of sin in general from the scientific standpoint. For our present purpose we can regard the matter quite simply, as something of which we have all plenty of experience; but I maintain that when we are speaking of the sin against which God's anger blazes, we do not mean the sins of failure, the burden of remorse, the acts which cause contrition and penitence on the part of a saint or a child or a labouring man—a labouring man or woman of any class; we mean something quite other than that. And I assume that therein we are consistent with the doctrines of the Church.

If not a wicked absurdity, it is surely a libel to as-

sert that God is angry with ordinary human failings, and with the dismal lapses from virtue of poor outcasts of civilisation. We are familiar, for instance, with the fierce wrath of Christ,—his language was denunciatory in the extreme: but against what sort of people? It was not the publicans and the harlots whom he stigmatised as a generation of vipers, or whom he threatened with the damnation of hell; rather it was some specimens of the unco' guid of that day—people perfectly satisfied with themselves, people ready to forbid deeds of healing on the Sabbath, and eager to stifle the holiest if they had the chance [1] —it was with these that he was angry, not with anyone who could be described as helplessly and inefficiently struggling out of the mire towards better things.

There were sins of which he was genuinely ashamed, so that he stooped and wrote upon the ground when they were suddenly obtruded upon his notice by coarse experimenters: shame so acute that even those ruffians had the grace subsequently to slink away; but it was stoning of the Prophets, wilful blindness to the Highest, it was blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, that excited his fiercest reprobation.

Just as it is impossible for the human race at any given time to select that one of their number who will be best remembered a thousand years hence, so it is difficult for us to judge what class of people are rendering themselves most liable to high Displeasure now.

[1] Mark iii. 5, 6, 29.

I suppose that the respectable and religious world of Judæa was genuinely astonished, and not a little scandalised, at its vigorous denunciation by an itinerant Preacher, long ago; and it is just possible that to-day those self-satisfied people who shut their eyes to truth, and propagate error, are at least as harmful to the general advance as are some individuals whom Society for its own safety finds it necessary to keep in seclusion.[1]

A Church which, let us say, excommunicates Tolstoi may possibly be composed of pious individuals whom it does not become us to judge, but I can conceive that in its corporate capacity any Church which opposes reform, which persistently takes the wrong side, which sustains abuses such as the *droits de seigneur* in the past, and perhaps other only less flagrant abuses to-day, may be regarded as deserving of vigorous Denunciation; and if such an institution, in some neighbouring country or elsewhere, should happen to fall upon evil days, it may find itself unsuccessful in its endeavour to fasten the blame upon anything but itself.

There are many grades of sin; and anyone may know the kind of sin which excites the anger of God, by bethinking him of the kind which arouses his own

[1] And, incidentally, may it not be also possible that the omission on the part of Society to make any serious and satisfactory effort to train and humanise and redeem those whom it thus takes under its providential control (not to mention their subjection to the inhuman device of solitary confinement) is liable to be regarded in High Quarters as deserving of reprobation just as severe as that accorded to any more actively committed crime?

best and most righteous anger. I can imagine that the infernal proceedings of Nero and of the Holy Inquisition were repugnant and nauseating to the Universe to a degree which was almost unbearable. The fierce indignation that would blaze out if one were maliciously to torture a child or an animal in view of an ordinary man or woman, would surely be a spark of the Divine wrath; and we have been told that a millstone round the neck of a child-abuser is too light a penalty.

Sins of this kind are a boil, an abscess, on the Universe: they must be attacked and cured by human co-operators, they are hardly tractable otherwise;[1] just as in the complex aggregate of cells we call our body the dominant intelligence cannot unaided cope with its own disease, but must depend on the labours of its micro-organisms, the phagocytes, which swarm to any poisoned plague spot, and there actively and painfully struggle with and inflame and attack the evil, till one side or other is overcome: so it is with man as an active ingredient in the universe. We are the white corpuscles of the cosmos: and like the corpuscles we are an essential ingredient of the system, our full potentiality being latent until stimulated into activity by disease.

If it is possible for a man at times to feel a sort of hatred and anger against his own weaker and worser self, so I can imagine a God feeling what may be imperfectly spoken of as disgust and wrath at de-

[1] Psalm cxv. 16.

fects which still exist in his Universe—in Himself, dare we say?—defects for which in a manner he is in some sort responsible, defects which he has either caused, or for ultimate reasons permitted, or has not yet, in the present stage of evolution, been able to cure consistently with full education and adequate scope for free development of personality; defects which surely his conscious creatures will assist him to remove, now that the bare possibility of the existence of these ferocious evils has done its salutary and ultimately beneficent work.

In this sense, therefore, it would be inappropriate to deny any amount of wrath against sin and even against the blatant sinner—the class of people who can only be impressed by the falling of a stone which shall grind them to powder. But it is not for people in the vicious state that the consolations of religion are available, they are not the bruised reed whom he will not break: and there is no sense in perplexing ordinary struggling, kindly, weak, unhappy humanity, with alleged fearful penalties attaching to even minor disobedience: penalties which must be exacted somehow, no matter much from whom; nor need we spoil people's conception of the Fatherhood of God with distorted legends, representing him as a Roman Father who will not scruple to visit their sins and shortcomings upon the innocent body of his own Son, since that is the only condition on which his wrath may be turned away and his hand not stretched out still.

3. There is one sentence in my last chapter wherein I appear to suggest that Christ's body was human, his spirit divine; thus making a possibly untenable though simple distinction between the vehicle and the manifestation, and trespassing on a theological territory which is full of heretical pit-falls.

It would have been better to avoid even the appearance of entering on so large a question as the nature of Christ by a mere side-door. My object at the moment was not anything so ambitious, but merely to indicate what would be the effect on mankind of the arrival of a personage, with a human and therefore accessible and mortal body, animated by a spirit of divine perfection. I wished to urge that among the results of the thorough incarnation of a truly Divine Spirit would be the beginnings of a real atonement between man and God; and that the influence exerted would be exerted wholly on man. Farther than that I did not then intend to go; nor do I propose to go much farther now, though the temptation is considerable. It is easy to recognise that the subjects of the Incarnation and the Resurrection are profoundly difficult, and yet to feel impelled to express surprise at the language which eminent theologians sometimes permit themselves to employ. I take the following astounding sentence from Canon Moberly's article in *Lux Mundi*:

P. 236. "No one will now dispute that Jesus died upon the Cross. If He did not on the third day rise again from that death to life—*cadit quæstio*—all Christian dogma, all Christian faith, is at an end."

I suppose it is intended as a paraphrase of St. Paul's "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." But the two statements are perfectly different. If Christ be not risen in some sense or other, if his death was the end of him, according to the current but perhaps not quite correct conception of the death of a dog, then indeed is the prospect blank.

But "rise again from death to life on the third day" must mean far more than persistent existence and influence: it seems to mean resuscitation, after the manner of Lazarus. Indeed, the fourth article of the Church definitely asserts that it does mean that and more. But an attempt to link the whole of Christian faith inextricably with an anatomical statement about flesh and bones, as in Article 4 of the Anglican Church, is rash.

Again:

P. 237. "No one to-day disputes that He was truly man. Is it true that He was very God? It is either true or false. As to the fact there are only the two alternatives. And between the two the gulf is impassable. If it is not false it is true. If it is not absolutely true it is absolutely false."

Do theologians always know what they mean when they glibly use, in a serious and solemn sense, the awful term God? Have they any notion of the Universe at all? Are they still limited to tribal or planetary conceptions of Deity? They talk, or used to talk, about "dispensations." We ourselves, as a nation, give dispensations to children or savages other

than we should give to developed people; a planetary dispensation is one thing, a planetary God another. These attempted identifications of the Messiah with the Most High, verge on the blasphemous. When Peter was blessed for a burst of bold and enthusiastic affirmation and adequate recognition of Christ's divine nature, he said no such thing as that. What he said was, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

As to affirming that Christ is either God or is not God and that there is nothing more to be said: there are few complex propositions of which so simple a positive or negative affirmation can be made. For instance, it is almost proverbially difficult to reply to the childish question whether a given historical character was "good" or was not good.

The word God must have an infinite diversity of meaning, and two uses of the term are prominent. One connotes vaguely the Absolute Sustainer and Comprehender of all existence: the other signifies such detailed conception of Godhead as the human race has been able to frame. This latter has been helped on mightily by the revelation of Jesus, among those who can accept it,—the revelation of genuinely human faculties and feelings, and even something of the unconscious simplicity, of childhood,[1] in the Divine Being,—and the further revelation, so enthusiastically glimpsed by the youthful David near the end of Browning's poem "Saul," the perception that Di-

[1] Luke ix. 48.

vine as well as human love may be and actually is strong enough to submit to sacrifice and genuine suffering on behalf of the beloved.

This revelation and perception may to some have become so keen and piercing that to no other aspect of Godhead can they pay attention. These are they who say that Christ was very God in the absolute sense; and subjectively they may be right. It is a statement, not of what they conceive of Christ, but of what they mean by God. One cannot define or explain the known in terms of the unknown.

4. Lastly we come to the doctrine of a vicarious Atonement, and in what sense that can be considered to embody a genuine truth. The late Bishop of Southampton, Dr. Arthur Lyttelton, in his article on the Atonement in *Lux Mundi* (pp. 282, 283), says that—

"It was from the Law that the Jews derived their religious language; their conceptions of sacrifice, of atonement, of the effects of sin, were moulded by the influence of the Mosaic ceremonies. . . . The sacrificial ceremonies and language of the Law throw light upon the apostolic conception of the Sacrifice, the Atonement of Christ."

With this historical estimate I entirely agree. The ceremony of the Scapegoat, and indeed the whole so-called Mosaic system, are clearly responsible for a great deal of the doctrine which penetrated into the New Testament, and has survived even to the present day.

But then it will be found that this same Article is full of the word "propitiation":—a word which embodies compactly what I regard as an error or a crudity, and serves to focus the issue. The basis of his contention throughout is given succinctly in the following passage (p. 282):

"Examination of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament is necessary in a discussion of the doctrine of the Atonement, for several reasons.

"The institutions of the Law were, in the first place, ordained by God, and therefore intended to reveal in some degree His purposes, His mind towards man."

That is where I join issue. I would rather go to the opposite extreme and say that the Gospel was an attempt to break away from sacrificial and priestly tradition; that the "not destroy but fulfil" referred to the major denunciations and other accumulations of race-experience, which were on right lines as far as they went, not to the minor institutions and superstitions which had become an incubus destructive of living personal religion. We may not all in every respect be equally enamoured of the parable of the Prodigal Son—I myself am conscious of a subterranean sympathy with the sentiments expressed by his elder brother—but the whole story is very human, very familiar, and full of manifest inspiration; and without wishing to press it unduly, we must admit that any feeling of wrath against the offender, or even against the offence, is rather conspicuously absent from its scheme. The sense of guilt is there, in pro-

nounced form, but as a one-sided feeling; and its paternal counterpart seems not to have been removed by expiatory sacrifice or by propitiation of any kind, but simply to be non-existent. There is very little residue of the Mosaic dispensation in that story.

So markedly has this been felt indeed by some preachers that, in dismay at finding themselves adrift from their familiar moorings, a few have actually seized upon the fatted calf and tried to construct some kind of propitiatory sacrifice out of that.

But observe that I have never said a word against vicarious *suffering*: I have contended against the notion of vicarious *punishment*—a very different idea. But I cannot agree with everything that is said even about vicarous suffering—real though it admittedly is. For instance, the Bishop of Southwark urges that the vicarious suffering of the Atonement did somehow redress, cancel, redeem, propitiate,—these words are used in a private letter, while their substance appears in the article above referred to,—and he appears to insist that the idea of a Father who is necessarily hard upon us because himself so righteous, is a part of the orthodox view. With great deference I cannot admit the appropriateness of the above verbs to modern insight: they seem to me saturated with the atmosphere of pagan survival and of ante-Isaiah Jewish traditions. No one supposes them to apply to vicious and persistent sins; but if they only apply to negligences and ignorances for which we are heartily sorry and earnestly repent, they are

unnecessary, except in a subjective and comforting sense.

But then this is a real sense: there must be some meaning in the perennial experience of relief and renovation at the Cross. Was it not there that Christian's burden fell,—type of many thousands of devout persons? Is there no regenerating agency at work in justification of this mass of real human experience? Far be it from me to doubt it; and it behoves me, who have presumed to emphasise one aspect, to emphasise the other also, in order to make a picture not too obviously incomplete and one-sided.

I am now going to use the word "sin" in its theological and, so to speak, "official" sense,—the sense of imperfection, disunion, lack of harmony, the struggle among the members that St. Paul for all time expressed; there is usually associated with it a sense of impotence, a recognition of the impossibility of achieving peace and unity in one's own person, a feeling that aid must be forthcoming from a higher source. It is this feeling which enables the spectacle of any noble self-sacrificing human action to have an elevating effect, it is this which gropes after the possibilities of the highest in human nature, it is a feeling which for large tracts of this planet has found its highest stimulus and completest satisfaction in the life and death of Christ. All religions worthy of the name are based upon some heroic and self-sacrificing life, upon some man with clearer vision than his fellows, one who is in closer touch and sympathy with the Divine.

And not insight and heroism alone: Paul was able to bear the sufferings of this present time with heroism, but Paul was not crucified for us, nor are we baptised in the name of Paul. No, there is evidently something unique about the majesty of Jesus of Nazareth which raises him above the rank of man; and the willingness of such a Being to share our nature, to live the life of a peasant, and to face the horrible certainty of execution by torture, in order personally to help those whom he was pleased to call his brethren, is a race-asset which, however masked and overlaid with foreign growths, yet gleams through every covering and suffuses the details of common life with fragrance.

This conspicuously has been a redeeming, or rather a regenerating agency—I know nothing of "cancelling," "redressing," or "propitiating": those words I repudiate; but it has regenerated,—for by filling the soul with love and adoration and fellow-feeling for the Highest, the old cravings have often been almost hypnotically rendered distasteful and repellent, the bondage of sin has been loosened from many a spirit, the lower entangled self has been helped from the slough of despond and raised to the shores of a larger hope, whence it can gradually attain to harmony and peace.

There are other parts of the Hon. Arthur Lyttelton's beautiful essay on the Atonement in *Lux Mundi* to which I should like to refer. I find myself in agreement with the initial three or four pages and

with the concluding three or four pages almost entirely. By dint of working through a maze of rather intractable material, which he treats as well as it is possible for it to be treated, he arrives at what I conceive to be the legitimate conclusion. He discards the infinite-punishment doctrine completely, he brushes lightly aside M'Leod Campbell's infinite-repentance modification of it, and he attempts to justify the view of a perfect sacrifice.

So far as he associates this with vicarious penalty and emphasises the *propitiatory* aspect of the Atonement, he goes, as I consider, wrong; he even argues that in his agony and death the Son must have been engaged in propitiating not only his Father's wrath but his own also; that he was, in fact, taking upon himself, and so both retrospectively and prospectively warding off from others, the wrath of the Lamb. This truly is a logical outcome of the orthodox doctrine, but it should serve as one of the modes of discrediting some of the crudity in that doctrine and reducing it to a kind of absurdity.

But when Dr. Lyttelton arrives at page 310 he has emerged from Mosaic mediævalism into an atmosphere of truth: it is *true* that Christ bore his sufferings, as we should learn to bear ours, victoriously and in unbroken union with God. He showed that the highest and the best might have to suffer, so long as the world was imperfect.

In an admirable essay on "Pain" by J. R. Illingworth in *Lux Mundi* this part of the matter is put with great clearness:

"Once for all the sinless suffering of the Cross has parted sin from suffering with a clearness of distinction never before achieved. . . . The sight of perfect sinlessness combined with perfect suffering has cleared our view for ever. . . . Sin indeed always brings suffering in its train, but the suffering we now see to be of the nature of its antidote. . . . But while sin involves suffering, suffering does not involve sin. . . . We suffer because we sin, but we also sin because we decline to suffer. . . . The pleasures of each generation evaporate in air; it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world." And so on (p. 123 to the end).

The problem which had puzzled the ages, the problem of the book of Job, of the tower of Siloam, was practically solved.

And Christ showed how the sting might be taken out of all suffering by meeting it with a spirit of undaunted faith. The power of sin lay in the presence of an evil and rebellious disposition. Rid of that, and though pains and sorrows would come as before, they could be faced in a spirit. not of submission only, but of undying love and hope and almost joy.

So the cognate or complementary problem of the Greek Dramatists also—the problem which looms large in the tragedies of Euripides in especial—the dread that man is the sport and plaything of omnipotence—the fear, the paralysing fear, of caprice or even wickedness on the part of higher powers—the dismal uncertainty whether pain is not sometimes mere gratuitous torture, the outcome of divine jeal-

ousy or malevolence or anger or some other pagan attribute: all this was somehow removed from mankind by the victory of Christ, and except in a few individual cases has never very seriously troubled it since.

Not only was indifference to suffering and temporal loss the outcome of it, but there was superadded a certain glory in suffering, in emulation of so noble an example: to fill up, as was hyperbolically said, what was behind; this feeling infused such vitality into the Apostles and the early Church as to carry them victoriously through a terrible period of danger and untold misery. It made them staunch; men and emperors found that they simply could not effectively hurt those whom this faith had seized. And in less troublous times the element of suffering and poverty was still felt to be so vital that it was often self-inflicted in order to secure a deeper joy. So is it always in ages of burning faith; comfort and luxury and this present life, with all that they rightly contain of happiness, are cast aside as almost worthless in exchange for a spiritual exaltation.

But it will be said that this violent enthusiasm and contempt for mere individual temporal well-being is not Christian alone, that it is common to all religions. Granted. I will not contend that Christ was the only channel of this influence, though he has been the channel for most of us; nor do Buddhism, Brahminism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, exhaust the category of religions more or less efficient in this particular. In islands of strange worship, amid savages of

unclean life, the same enthusiasm for the spiritual as dominating the material is felt; for it is a part of the truth of God, and is limited to no age or creed. And in countries which by superficial outsiders are said to have no religious faith it is to be found. The Japanese soldier throws away his individual life by the thousand, in order that his nation may take a noble place in the world and begin its destined work of civilising Asia; yet when he is dead what is Asia or his country to him? He *must* be dominated by a living faith, in perhaps he knows not what. He may not be able to express it, but his faith may be none the less efficient for lacking the outward precision of an Athanasian formula.

But whatever be the case with other religions, the sacrifice of Christ has convinced the Western world of sin to a unique degree, of its reality and dire consequence, of its unreasonableness, its aspect as a disease which must be cured—with the knife if need be, but cured; we have learnt that it is foreign to the universe, it is not the will of God, it is not due to his caprice, or amusement, or dictation, or predestination, or pagan example; it is something which gives even Him pain and suffering; it is something to be rid of, and there is no peace or joy to be had until unity of will is secured and past rebellions are forgiven. The sin of the creature involves suffering in the Creator: the whole of existence is so bound together that disease in one part means pain throughout. This is the element of truth in the vicariousness of suffering,

and in extension of suffering to the Highest; but it is not vicariously penal, nor is it propitiatory.

The orthodox doctrine of the Atonement implicitly maintains that God cannot forgive sin, unless and until He has exacted an adequate penalty somewhere. This does embody a kind of truth, for an eddy of conduct, good or ill, can only disappear by expending its energy in producing some definite effect. In one sense, therefore, a penalty must follow every inharmonious action: a penalty not falling on the wrongdoer alone, but, involving the innocent likewise, and bringing needless pain into existence. Perception of this may be part of the punishment, for there can hardly be a fiercer feeling than remorse; but the sting will not be fully felt till the spirit has become broken and contrite and open to the healing influences of forgiveness. There is no agony like that of returning animation. Forgiveness removes no penalty: it may even increase pain, though only that of a regenerative kind; it leaves material consequences unaltered, but it may achieve spiritual reform.

Divine forgiveness is undoubtedly mysterious, but it must be real, for we are conscious that we can forgive each other. It should be an axiom that whatever man can do, God *à fortiori* can do also; meaning by "man" not merely any poor individual man, but the whole highest ethos of the race, including saints, apostles, prophets, everybody,—and including Christ himself. How are we taught to ask for forgiveness of sins? *As* we forgive others. This does not solely

mean, as it is usually taken to mean, *because* we forgive others, nor in so far as, nor on condition that we forgive our fellows, but it means *after the same fashion* as we forgive or should forgive them. And the reason given is a luminous one; it has nothing to do with propitiation, it makes no reference to sacrifice or vicarious penalty, nor to the merits of any mediator; no, the reason given is a noble and sufficient one, and it is simply this: "For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever." What more can we add but the word "Amen"?

CHAPTER XII

THE MATERIAL ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY

MEN of science who make a life-study of the material world alone, and habitually close their minds to the influences of poetry and of emotional and religious and even philosophical literature generally, are apt to grow into the belief that the material aspect of the universe is the only aspect which matters,—sometimes going so far as to hold that it is the only aspect which is truly real.

Theologians and mystics and even men of letters, are liable to err in a similar though complementary manner, and by exclusive attention to one region of human nature become so imbued with its supreme importance that they ignore and despise the universe of matter, force, and energy; regarding with complacence not only their own ignorance, but the ignorance also of teachers of youth.

This distinction between schools of thought on the intellectual plane is fairly obvious; and a similar distinction holds also in the religious sphere.

There are those, on the one hand, who hold that "God" and "spiritual beings" and "guidance" and "intelligent control" are words of only superstitious meaning—that the world, as revealed by our senses, is the sole reality, our bodily life our true and only

existence, and the world of poetry and religion but a dream.

There are those, on the other hand, who so immerse themselves in spiritual contemplation that the things of sense shrink into nothingness, and our present life, with all that pertains to bodily and terrestrial activity, becomes insignificant, or even acquires a negative value, since material things are a snare and a temptation, tending to divert our feet from the true path, and apt to fill our souls with clogging and vicious trifles.

The extreme in the one case has been called roughly materialism or naturalism or positivism; its religion is a practical religion of human nature and earthly service, its god a glorified humanity, and its immortality merely racial, being one of sentiment and memory.

The extreme in the other case has been called spiritualism or mysticism or asceticism or puritanism, for it has many phases; its religion is largely occupied with worship, sometimes in the form of contemplative awe and ecstasy, sometimes of labour for the glory of God; its God is a high and holy Personality of illimitable perfection, far removed from the struggles and trials of this mortal life, which is a mere episode or probationary discipline before men's souls are lapped for ever in the peace of the Eternal, or are tortured by exclusion from His presence for all eternity.

Between the extremes comes the religion which we know as Christianity. Looked at cosmically, this

aims at being a comprehensive and inclusive scheme, capable of embracing the essential elements of both the other systems,—recognising and worshipping God in the Highest, loving and serving man even at his lowest, accepting the facts of nature and despising nothing that exists, desiring to utilise the opportunities of this present life to the uttermost, and yet believing that it is possibly not the beginning, certainly not the end, of our existence; rejoicing in the objects of sense, realising also the beauty and truth of things only reached now by studious contemplation, rejecting the idea of any ultimate conflict between matter and spirit, and, when they appear to conflict, giving supremacy to the spiritual.

It is the mission of the Priest to emphasise one of these aspects; it is the business of the Naturalist to emphasise the other; it is the desire of the Philosopher to realise the element of truth in both departments, to grasp truth in its breadth and comprehensiveness; while it is the duty of the Religious man to apply the truths, so recognised, in the conduct of practical life.

But the task of the unifier is not an easy one; it is not to be supposed that every exuberant utterance of the mystic is true, that every balanced imitation of the naturalist is true, and that it only remains to understand and accept both. His task is much harder than that: he has to exercise discrimination, to scrutinise and weigh carefully, not letting himself be over-persuaded by the enthusiasts on either side, and so gradually to evolve for himself a system of thought which is as true and helpful as may be possible to a being in his

present state of development. This is the task which lies before us all, and this is the task upon which the great prophets of humanity, each in his day and generation, have been engaged. This work absorbs the attention of many leading Christian theologians at the present time—men who exhibit welcome breadth of knowledge and are imbued with scientific method.

I. The Correspondence of Spiritual and Material

First of all, then, the whole doctrine of "Incarnation" exhibits an idea of the interaction between the spiritual and material. Just as man has at least a dual nature—the material organism and the dominant mind—so it was felt must God be thought of as interacting directly with this material scheme, and must be supposed incarnated in or clothed upon with a material body, subject to growth, disintegration, and death, like our own. An extraordinary and bold conception, manifestly symbolic or pictorial of something,—not literal nor reducible to any simple formula,—it nevertheless involves a great truth, the kinship between spirit and matter. Any divine revelation to be accessible to us, must have an accessible and bodily form. So must a ghost or vision; however objectively unreal it may be, it must appear in the likeness of man, and will usually have garments such as we have been accustomed to associate with human beings: it must appear in material accessories, or it could not appear at all. That is the essence of revelation: and even in the most sublimated case, even if no outward form or

voice were subjectively constructed, yet something in the brain must be affected, else not only could there be neither speech nor language, there could not be any definite impression, not even the vanishing impression of a dream.

But the materialising tendency of the human race has gone farther than that. Given the incarnation of a divine spirit in a mortal frame, they have not been content with that already sufficiently difficult idea; they have pressed further to ask how that body was produced, and what ultimately became of it; and so we have legends of abnormal birth and of bodily resurrection.

But the latter difficulty is not a problem raised by the phenomena associated with Christ alone; it is a difficulty which has troubled all humanity. We are all supposed to be spirits endowed with immortality, as taught the ancients; but we all have bodies—the apparently necessary medium of manifestation and of individuality,—what becomes of them? Socrates was content to suppose that the body remained behind, sloughed off, and was restored to the elements of this material world. But the early Christians were not satisfied thus to get rid of their material part: a vein of materialism ran through their Christianity; they supposed that the bodies were only temporarily discarded, and would ultimately rise and rejoin their divorced spirits at the sound of some future signal: a grotesque idea which, strange to say, still survives in the thoughts of unimaginative persons and in some portions of the liturgy.

But, it is contended, this is an essential part of Christianity, however it be interpreted; the mere persistence of existence was a pagan idea and existed long before Christ. The special feature of Christianity was not the survival or persistence of existence, even of individual existence, but the resurrection of the body; and hence this doctrine is rightly emphasised in the creeds.

Moreover, the very basis of Christianity—the Incarnation—emphasises and dignifies the perception that man consists essentially of both soul and body, and that he is to be aided and raised and saved, not by spiritual influences alone, but by agencies appealing to his senses and acting primarily upon his bodily organism.

It is the neglect of this truth which has often rendered the evangelising activity of religious bodies so futile. They have tried to save souls alone. They are growing wiser now, and are beginning to realise that once bodily conditions are set fairly right, people's souls are much better than has been credited; there is a lot of innate goodness in humanity, and to enable it to blossom and flourish it needs little more than the material care which is lavished upon the plants in the garden. They themselves do the flowering and fruiting,—the gardener has only to expose them to sun and air to keep them clear of parasites and weeds.

And so, throughout, it will be found that Christianity has a definitely materialistic side; and it becomes a question for us what is to be the modern interpreta-

tion of all the singularly developed mediæval doctrine, and how far it is to be accepted as in any sense corresponding to reality. For that it is not to be accepted in a crude form, such as that in which it is preached by ignorant persons to-day, was obvious to the New Testament writers, and doubtless to the most enlightened saints of all time; but that it contains some element of truth, enshrined in its strange formalism is to be strongly maintained.

The purely spiritual side of religion, so far as it contents itself with positive assertion and is not occupied with denying material facts, does not now concern us. It is the material side which I wish to consider, especially whether religion should have a materialistic basis, and how far its excursion into materialism may be warranted by experience. It is plain that for our present mode of apprehending the universe a material vehicle is essential; that which has no contact with the world of matter cannot be directly apprehended, and has for us no effective existence. A purely spiritual agency may be active and the activity may be guessed at or inferred, and may be believed in, but the only evidence of its existence that can be adduced is the manifestation of that activity through matter, and the only moments when a glimpse can be caught of the activity are the moments at which action on matter occurs.

Dreams, visions, thoughts, inspirations,—all things known to us, no matter how intangible and subtle their essence—are enabled to enter what we call our present consciousness solely by some action on, or ac-

tion in, the brain. They may act on other material particles too, but on the matter of the brain they *must* act, or they give no sign.

A whole world may exist beyond our senses, may exist even in space and close to us for all we can tell, and yet if it has no means of connexion, no links with the material world, it must remain outside our consciousness; and this isolation must last until we grow a new sense, or otherwise develop fresh faculties, so that intercommunication and interaction can begin. Whether there is any interaction at present between this and a supersensual world is a question that may be debated, but the above assertion that some such interaction is an essential preliminary to our recognition of such a world is hardly susceptible of debate.

Now, this dependence of the spiritual on a vehicle for manifestation is not likely to be a purely temporary condition: it is probably a sign or example of something which has an eternal significance, a representation of some permanent truth.

That is certainly the working hypothesis which, until negatived, we ought to make. Our senses limit us, but do not deceive us: so far as they go, they tell us the truth. I wish to proceed on that hypothesis. To suppose that our experience of the necessary and fundamental connexion between the two things—the something which we know as mind and the something which is now represented by matter—has no counterpart or enlargement in the actual scheme of the universe, as it really exists, is needlessly to postulate confusion and instrumental deception.

Philosophers have been so impressed with this that they have conjectured that mind and matter are but aspects, or modes of perception, of one fundamental comprehensive unity; a unity which is neither exactly mind nor exactly matter as we conceive them, but is something fundamental and underlying both, as the ether is now conceived of as sustaining and in some sense constituting all the phenomena of the visible universe.

This monistic view, if true at all, is likely to be permanently and actually true; and, though it by no means follows that mind is dependent on matter as we know it, it will probably be still by means of something akin to matter—something which can act as a vehicle and represent it in the same sort of way that matter represents it now—that it will hereafter be manifested.

This probability or possibility may be regarded as one form of statement of an orthodox Christian doctrine. Assuming that Christianity emphasises the material aspect of religion, as its supporters assert that it does, it supplements the mere survival of a discarnate spirit, a homeless wanderer or melancholy ghost, with the warm and comfortable clothing of something that may legitimately be spoken of as a "body"; that is to say, it postulates a supersensually visible and tangible vehicle or mode of manifestation, fitted to subserve the needs of future existence as our bodies subserve the needs of terrestrial life—an ethereal or other entity constituting the persistent "other aspect," and

fulfilling some of the functions which the atoms of terrestrial matter are employed to fulfil now.

Not only the authority of St. Paul, but the influence also of poets, can be appealed to as sustaining some truth underlying the crude idea above formulated. To them the highest feelings have, and appear necessarily to have, a material outcome or counterpart associated with them. Take "love," for instance: many have been the attempts to spiritualise it into a discarnate entity; and doubtless it is in its highest form the purest and least gross of all the emotions; yet it must ultimately be recognised that it has a sacramental or material side, wherein the flesh and the spirit are united and inseparable, and where neither can be discarded without loss to the other. It has been always easy to deride and condemn the bodily side of our nature, but by the highest seers this has not been done. The glorification and transfiguration, not the reprobation, of the body has been the theme of the highest prophets and poets, and those who in "matter" detect nothing but evil are essential, though well-meaning, blasphemers. It has been easy also to tilt the balance the other way, and, by discarding or ignoring the spiritual side, to wallow and blaspheme in a far more degraded and degrading manner. This tendency in times of decadence has been dominant, and nations and individuals have had to struggle with the overweight of their animal ancestry, and some have succumbed; but, shorn of its exaggeration, there is a truth to be perceived on the material side too, and we must be careful that in spurning the exaggeration

we do not lose some of the essential truth embodied in it. In so far as the mis-called "fleshly school of poetry," for instance, is not fleshly in any low sense, but inspired, the permanence and importance and dignity of the side now known as material is the truth which is being preached.[1] It may happen that in some cases the message is too dazzling for the messenger, and he may succumb to the enchantment of his vision, so that he lose the jewel itself and be left blindly grasping only its empty setting; but the message itself must not be unduly discredited on that account.

Assuming then—as consonant with, or even as part of, Christianity—the doctrine of the dignity and necessary character of some quasi-material counterpart of every spiritual essence, it becomes our duty to inquire what part of this connexion is essential, and what is accidental and temporary.

Take our present incarnation as an example. We display ourselves to mankind in the garb of certain clothes, artificially constructed of animal and vegetable materials, and in the form of a certain material organism, put together by processes of digestion and assimilation, likewise composed of terrestrial materials.

The identity of the corporeal substances and chemical compounds is evidently not of a permanent and important character. Whether they formed part of sheep or birds or fish or plants, they are assimilated

[1] I regret to have to refer, even for the sake of illustration, to this discredited and noxious criticism of the poetry of Rossetti, but I hope that the lofty character of the thing criticised is sufficiently manifest to enable every reader to perceive the beauty of the message and the inspiration of the poet.

and become part of us, being arranged by our subconscious activities and vital processes into appropriate form, just as truly as other materials are consciously woven into garments, no matter what they originally sprang from. Moreover, just as our clothes wear out and require darning and patching, so our bodies wear out; the particles are in continual flux; each giving place to others, and being constantly discarded and renewed. The identity of the actual or instantaneous body is therefore an affair of no importance: the individuality lies deeper than that, and belongs to whatever it is which put the particles together in this shape and not another.

II. The Resurrection of the Body

When, therefore, at what we call death, this controlling entity leaves the terrestrial sphere of things—assuming that it does not promptly go out of existence, a thing which it would be very surprising for any existing entity to do—it is unnecessary to suppose that it will continue in a wholly discarnate condition for a time, until presently it becomes able to resume the poor decayed refuse which it left behind on this planet.

The idea of rejoining the corpse in this sense is unthinkable and repulsive: it could only arise in ages of ignorance. The identity of the material particles does not constitute the identity of the person, nor is it essential to the identity of the body. What is wanted to make definite our thoughts of the persistent existence of what we call our immortal part, is simply

the persistent power of manifesting itself to friends, *i.e.* to persons with whom we are in sympathy, by means as plain and substantial in that order of existence as the body was here—though the manifestation need not be of so broadcast and indiscriminate a character as it is now;[1]—we may surmise that any immortal part must have the power of constructing for itself a suitable vehicle of manifestation which is the essential meaning of the term "body."

The question whether the individuality and personal identity and consciousness and memory, and all that constitutes an ego, are preserved, is worthy of examination and research; the fate of the terrestrial residue is of no great consequence—not much more than if it consisted solely of old clothes.

To those who stigmatise this as dualism, and say that it is contrary to the ultimate identity of matter and spirit, I reply No. Monism does not assert that atoms of matter are any aspect of *me*. The penholder is an instrument subservient to my will, and it may be made to express my thought, but it is no part of me—I can throw it down when done with, and when worn out I can burn or bury it, but I do not

1 This sentence probably requires amplification: its meaning is this —Present human bodies bring us into contact with strangers and make us aware of people in whom perchance we take no interest. Hereafter our acquaintanceship may perhaps be limited to those with whom we are linked by ties of affinity and affection—the mode of communication being probably of a more sympathetic or telepathic character, and less physical, than now. If so, this planetary episode is a great opportunity for enlarging our sympathies and for making new friends; so that the emphasis laid by great prophets on "love," and their condemnation of selfishness as a deadly vice specially destructive of fulness of personality and wealth of existence, becomes amply intelligible.

thereby lose the power of taking another, nor of learning to write with a different instrument and in another language if I travel to other countries. There may be a sense in which all matter is evidence of, and an aspect of, the thought of some World-Mind; but most of it is certainly neither evidence nor aspect of *my* mind. Matter divorced from all Mind whatever may possibly thereby cease to exist; but the furniture certainly does not cease to exist when I leave the room, —nor would it be affected if all humanity were to perish off the planet.

Those who press monism to these absurd lengths will find a difficulty in preserving the clearness of their thoughts; and in self-defence they will take refuge in a narrow and illiterate and most unscientific variety of dogmatic scepticism, or agnostic dogmatism.

Soul and Body

The phrase "resurrection of the body" undoubtedly dates back to a period when it was thought that the residue laid in the grave would at some future signal be collected and resuscitated and raised in the air: and superstitions about missing fragments and about the permissibility of cremation, even to this day, are not extinct. But all this is clearly infantile, and has long been discarded by leaders of thought; and it were good if the phrases responsible for the misunderstanding could be amended also.

"Resurrection of *a* body" would be but little improvement, for the body that hereafter "shall be" is

not that body which was planted in the ground; and the future "body" can hardly be said to have risen from the grave. Nor does the Nicene version "resurrection of the dead" give much assistance, for that which survives is just that which never was dead; it did not cease to be, and then arise to new life; its existence, if persistent at all, is necessarily continuous; the whole argument for persistence of existence depends on continuity,—on the fact that real existence does not suddenly spring into being out of nothing, and then suddenly vanish as if it had not been.

Perhaps the word "resurrection" may be interpreted as meaning *revival* or *survival;* and "death" can be defined as a separation between the psychical and physical aspects of an individual, and as a definite physico-chemical process occurring to the body or material vehicle of manifestation. So far as the undying essence or spirit is concerned the teaching of Socrates holds to this day: "Let them bury him if they could catch him: but he himself would be out of their reach."

It is all very well to stigmatise this as pagan teaching, and to hold it in light esteem,—it is teaching to which multitudes to-day have not risen; and a real and vital belief in such a doctrine could not but have a beneficent influence on conduct. It may be true to say Christianity assumes all that, and supplements it with the Pauline doctrine of a resurrection-body, or spiritual body;—it does, but it is likewise true that the phrases of the Church do not assist people to grasp even the truth underlying the Socratic doctrine of immortality, and so, when they perceive the falsity of

corporeal resurrection, they are apt to lose faith even in persistence of existence. Having been accustomed to associate personality with a buried corpse, the manifest decay and dissipation of the body destroys, in the semi-educated, the whole idea of immortality; and with it is apt to go religion too. "Resurrection" is itself a misleading word: the phrases which suggest that the person himself is entombed, the phrases about waiting till the last day, and about the general resurrection, even the habit of burying with the face to the east, and the custom of burying relatives together, are all misleading or are liable to misinterpretation. Some of these customs are legitimate and humanly intelligible; and so strong a hold have these ideas on mankind, that even the greatest poets, who have shaken themselves loose from the thought, cannot, and possibly do not wish to, shake themselves loose from the time-honoured language in which it was embedded, for even Tennyson says:

> "in the vast Cathedral leave him."

But God forbid that I should presume to pragmatise or dogmatise as to the language which ought to be employed: let us get our thoughts clear, and the language of devotion and of poetry may continue to be employed in due season. Words and ancient phrases can touch the emotions, as music can, without being too closely scrutinised by the intellect; the formulæ of centuries must be respected, and a priggish precision of expression may be quite unsuited to worship.

III. The Resurrection of Christ

Let us then, in a spirit of orthodoxy, now approach the person of Christ—the Christ long recognised by Christendom as a Divine Person in human form: let us assume that in order to display himself to the inhabitants of this planet he was provided with a body like our own, eating and drinking and sleeping and suffering and dying like any of us: what should we expect to happen to his body—the body of Jesus of Nazareth—when it was done with?

That he should survive death, that he should be able to appear to worshippers, that he would exert a perennial and vivifying influence on his disciples of all time —all this is orthodox, and all this is not repugnant to science as I conceive it. Is anything more necessary? That a historial legend should have grown up concerning the disappearance of the body from a tomb is almost inevitable, considering the state of belief at the time. If an apparition of someone recently deceased appeared now to ignorant people, I imagine that most of them would expect the corpse to have been utilised for the purpose, and to have been either temporarily or permanently disturbed in its grave. And to disprove a continued existence it might be held sufficient, among ignorant people, to point triumphantly to a tomb not empty.

But, then, Christ by ecclesiastical hypothesis was unique: he was not as one of us, his appearance was likely to transcend ours, and his body was likely to be

differently constituted from ours: so it has been maintained.

I think it may be argued that, thus conceived, the Incarnation would hardly sustain the complete and efficient character which orthodox creeds claim for it. The whole idea of the Manhood is that he was a man like ourselves, subject to human needs, open even to temptation, obedient to pain and death. That his spirit was superior to ours few deny, but that his body was essentially different I confess seems to me like superstition. His raiment at any rate was made in the ordinary way, yet it too shared in the glory of the transfiguration. The Transfiguration was a splendid episode, typifying the dignifying and dominating of matter by the indwelling spirit. The shining in the eye of genius, the almost visible glow pervading the body in moments of exaltation, this, raised to a higher power, permeated and suffused the poor human body and travel-worn peasant garments of Christ, till the few privileged witnesses had to shade their eyes.

So it is reported concerning Moses after his solitary communion with Jehovah; so it may have been with Joan of Arc; so it may be again from time to time with the most exalted saints. These things are legends, it is true, but they are more than legends; they bear on their face the signs of hyperphysical truth—not in detail of narration, perhaps, but in essence. So it was with Saul's vision at Damascus; so it may have been with the scene at the Baptism; so, it is not inconceivable, may there be some foundation of truth

even for the legendary appearances to Magi and to shepherds at the Nativity.

The mental and the physical are so interwoven, the possibilities of clairvoyance are so unexplored, that I do not feel constrained to abandon the traditional idea that the coming or the going of a great personality may be heralded and accompanied by strange occurrences in the region of physical force. The mind of man is competent to enchain and enthrall the forces of nature, and to produce strange and weird effects that would not otherwise have occurred. Shall the power be limited to his conscious intelligence? May it not also be within the power of the subconscious intelligence, at moments of ecstasy, or at epochs of strong emotion or of transition?

That there should be storms and earthquakes at the Crucifixion is sure to be legendary, but that it was likewise true is not in the least inconceivable. We know too little to be able to dogmatise on such things: we must observe and generalise as we can.

Hence if the historical evidence is strong and definite for the disappearance, not of bodies from tombs, but of that one Body from its tomb—the exception being justified on the ground of its having been inhabited by an exceptionally mighty Spirit—I am not one to seek to deny the possibility on scientific grounds. I will only say that the proof of material resurrection or resuscitation adduced in the Gospel is not such as will bear scrutiny: it offers no case whatever to the Society for Psychical Research. If the

stone and the seal and the watch had been found intact, and yet the tomb empty, there would have been something to investigate. But to find the place abandoned, and the stone rolled away, is equivalent to find the grave rifled: no question of dematerialisation need arise. But surely that is not what should be meant by Christian Resurrection: I submit that for the purposes of religion at the present day no exceptional treatment of the discarded human body is necessary; and the difficulties introduced by the effort to contemplate the circumstances of anything approaching physical resuscitation, or re-employment of the same body, are very great.

The Appearances during the Forty Days are not inconsistent with the legends of apparitions the world over; and a farewell phantasmal appearance—described as an Ascension—is credible enough. The presence of the wounds also is quite consistent with what is observable in apparitions as known to us: they by no means establish physical identity. The body notoriously had not its old properties, for it appeared and disappeared and penetrated walls; and ultimately this supposed compound of terrestrial particles ascended into another order of things, "and sat down for ever at the right hand of God." We are out of the region of physics here, and attention to the details of any material body in such an atmosphere introduces strangely inappropriate considerations: the very atoms of which it was composed would not last for ever, the chemical compounds would soon decay: surely we need not assert such a thing of the body which was

buried in the tomb, any more than we assert it of the four or five previous bodies which, during the Incarnation, had been worn and discarded, particle by particle.

Moreover, it is depressing to the ordinary Christian, who knows or ought to know that his own flesh, bones, and other appurtenances will assuredly not rise, to have to think of Christ's Resurrection as a unique occurrence; for the express Pauline doctrine of the Resurrection is that it is the type or pattern of our resurrection; and the more normally we can regard the human side of Christ, and everything connected with his body both before and after death, the better and more hopeful is it for us his brethren.

May I suggest that the mystical spirit, which is the vital essence of any church or religious fellowship, though it may be incarnate for a time in a creed, should not be for ever fossilised therein, but should continue open to the fertilising influences of reason and expanding kowledge, and, like any other spirit, should dominate and survive its material body.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XII

Lest it be thought that a wholesome and proper ingredient of materialism as an element in Christianity has been in this chapter attacked, let me try to make plainer the balanced position taken or intended by attempting a summary of its main points. Its contentions are as follows:

1. That Christianity is an intermediate and unify-

ing religion, between the extremes of spiritualism on the one hand and materialism on the other; and that the whole idea of a divine Incarnation as well as many of the miracles and the sacraments, can be regarded as expressive of this comprehensive character.

2. That the correspondence or connexion between matter and spirit, as now known, is probably a symbol or sample of something permanently true, so that a double aspect of every fundamental existence is likely always to continue; but that the supposed necessary and perpetual dependence of the human spirit on ordinary chemical terrestrial matter, for its manifestation and activity, is illusory and superstitious. 1 Cor. xv, 49, 50.

3. That not only persistence of existence but full retention of personality and individuality can be conceived, without the hypothesis of retention of any particles of terrestrial matter; since identity of person in no way depends upon identity of particles even now.

4. That the real meaning of the term "body" should be explained and emphasised as connoting anything which is able to manifest feelings, emotions, and thoughts, and at the same time to operate efficiently on its environment. The temporary character of the present human body should be admitted for purposes of religion; although it usefully and truthfully displays the incarnate part of us during the brief episode of terrestrial life. Job. xix, 26.

5. That the incarnation of Divine Spirit called Christ revealed to humanity certain aspects of Deity

in a unique degree; but the more akin to ordinary humanity the human side of Christ can be considered, the more luminous is the teaching, and the better for the hold of Christianity upon the race. 1 Cor. xv, 16.

6. One of the lessons to be learned is the potentiality of the Divine latent in all humanity: and this is displayed both in its freedom to rebel and in its power of indispensable and filial service. John x, 30, 35.

7. That the spread of scepticism and dogmatic agnosticism is largely due to the attempted maintenance of incredible and materialistic dogmas by the orthodox; to the comparative neglect of the essential, the spiritual, and the practical.

8. That materialism of an untransfigured and unglorified description is out of place in religion, but that the right kind of materialism is in place. For the mystical or sacramental use of earthly materials is helpful, though there always comes a point at which they cease to be expressive. An attempt to press them beyond their significant point leads to impossible details, and becomes indistinguishable from fidgetting and worrying superstition, unworthy of an emancipated and Affiliated race.

9. That the salvation offered by Christianity is of the whole man—body and soul together—and that this fact is the supreme justification for energetic practical effort in rectifying social abuses, in improving social conditions, and securing to people generally a fair opportunity for a decent and honourable life.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DIVINE ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY

IV. Christianity and History

AS a physicist my desire is to go out as far as possible to meet theologians on their approach to the camp of physical science; for it is generally far more useful to discover points of possible agreement than to emphasise points of difference. To my comrades in science I would point out that the leading men among orthodox Christians now set us a good example, since they no longer seem to desire to interpose any insuperable protest against overhauling from time to time the material and historical assertions associated with Christianity, and discarding those which cannot be established as facts. Discarding, that is to say, those which do not satisfy one at least of two criteria or conditions: that of being well evidenced historically on the one hand, and that of satisfying or being felt essential to spiritual aspiration, either of an individual or of a church or fellowship on the other. If I am right in this understanding, I am willing to accept the criteria suggested, without further criticism, and have pleaded in the foregoing pages for the gradual reconsideration of certain traditional tenets, on the grounds:

(*a*) That they are not of a nature to be well evidenced historically (to say more than that would imply that I regarded myself as a competent historical critic);

(*b*) That they are not edifying to people at any reasonable intellectual level; while as to higher spiritual aspiration, it is independent of them.

It is satisfactory that culture and learned theologians of the present day profess themselves ready to welcome criticism of dogmas in which no doubt they personally believe; and we can now shortly proceed to the more positive or constructive division of our subject.

Meanwhile it is reasonable to accept the historic Christ, as represented in the Gospel, together with the general account given of his teachings. In so far as the record is not accurate—and even without any knowledge of biblical criticism we must admit that it is bound to be inaccurate—we may be sure that the record is likely to be inferior to the reality, that the report of the teachings may have been spoiled and garbled in places but is not likely to have been improved. Some of these spoilings may have been due to misunderstanding, others to a desire for extra edification; and it is difficult to say which attitude of a transcriber is the more dangerous.

A similar view, however, may be held concerning the record of the words of any astounding genius; his contemporaries and immediate successors are not

likely to improve upon his teachings: even as mere commentators they may exhibit well-intentioned stupidity; but, if they have to act also as reporters, omission eked out by exaggeration must be prominent, and unconscious misrepresentation is bound to occur.

But now in the case of Christ we may surely go much farther; we may admit his inspiration in an extraordinary sense, and may accept the general consensus of Christendom as testifying to his essentially divine character: in other words, he must perceive that he has revealed to the inhabitants of this planet some of the salient features of Godhead to an altogether exceptional extent.

He displays, in fact, attributes which many persons understand and signify when they use the word "God": so much so, that they call him by the name of the Spirit which he reveals.[1] He does not display *all* the known attributes of God—not those studied in Natural Theology, for instance,—but he exhibits those which are most important to poor struggling humanity, and those which by their very simplicity and naturalness might otherwise have been overlooked by the human race, or stigmatised as too hopelessly anthropomorphic. The attributes of Fatherhood, for instance, strongly and simply realised, constitute one revelation; the effective combination, or even identification, of love of God with service of neighbour, constitutes another; and there is, it seems to me, an

[1] The statement that the Christ depicted in the gospels is God, is a statement illustrative of our conception of Godhead, and not really an explanatory statement concerning Christ: we cannot define or explain the known in terms of the unknown.

even bolder conception of Deity suggested, in the dramatic parable "the child in the midst," of which I fancy we have but an abbreviated version.

The only place where we find it necessary to hesitate, and perhaps to remonstrate, is on the materialistic side of orthodox Christianity—the place where the ordinary phenomena of nature enter into the doctrines, and are more or less associated or incorporated with them. Here it is natural to plead for more elastic treatment, and here alone do I imagine that the modern mind can see farther and walk more securely than the mediæval mind; it is possible that in the light of accumulated knowledge it can in some respects see more clearly than even the saints and prophets of the past.

It has been the perennial glory of Christianity that it can adapt itself to all conditions of men and to all changing periods of time; but it has done so always by modification of the non-essential: the spirit and essence have preserved their identity; the accidentals, in Judæa, in ancient Rome, in mediæval Germany, in modern England and America,—the accidentals have been different.

But throughout, it will be said, certain of the material aspects have preserved their continuity and identity unchanged. Some of the miracles, especially the physical details supposed to accompany, or by some even to constitute, the Incarnation and the Resurrection, have never been doubted by Christians. Until recently, I agree, no, not to any great extent; but half a century ago they were seriously doubted

by the people who thereby felt themselves outside the flock, but who in all practical details of life and conduct were as good as—well, were comparable with—orthodox Christians. The disbelief went, in my judgment, too far: it extended itself to some of the spiritual teachings—those concerning prayer, for instance; and it threw needless doubt upon some phenomena, such as those referred to in the last chapter, which may after all have been facts. Whether it went too far or not, an atmosphere of disbelief became prevalent; and it was generated by the persistence of the faithful in certain material statements which to an age of more knowledge had become incredible. The extreme excursion of the pendulum has subsided now, but it is still swinging, and when it settles down it will not occupy precisely the same place as it did before the oscillation began. The swing was caused by a shifting of the fulcrum or point of support, and only the bob has been visible. So it has become our duty to determine how much and in what direction the real pivot of the pendulum has been effectively moved, and to realise that that is the position which will be taken by the oscillating mass of opinion when present disturbances have subsided. Those, if there be any, who think that it can ever go back permanently to a pre-nineteenth-century position, or to a position determined by the first six or any other past centuries, are assuredly mistaken.

We shall now endeavour to arrive at a closer appreciation of what the essence of Christianity really

is; first, however, recollecting what it has been considered to be by all sorts and conditions of men.

V. Varieties of Christianity

Christianity is a word of wide significance, and it is not easy to attach to it a definite meaning. It is clear that as it exists among us it has many phases, which may be grouped around five or six principal types.

1. First there is evangelical or spiritual Christianity, usually associated with the name of Paul, which seeks to emphasise a forensic scheme of salvation, and to link itself on to the Hebraistic and Hellenistic ideas of blood and vicarious sacrifice. Salvation by faith in the Atonement is the central feature of this scheme, and right conduct is a secondary though natural sequel to right belief and to trust in what by Divine mercy has been already fully accomplished; so that no "performance" is necessary for salvation, but only assimilation of the sacrifice and oblation of Christ, once and for ever accomplished.

This variety of Christianity aims at attending to the spiritual aspect only, and despises the material; it rejects the intervention of men and of material aids; it mistrusts the use of music and ornament, and it endeavours, sometimes with poor success, to condemn the beauty of this present world in comparison with the glory that shall be revealed; even the sacraments it is inclined to minimise, and to regard them as memorial services helpful to the spirit, rather than as

agencies of real and present efficacy achieving something otherwise unattainable. Definite historical fact is of supreme importance to this variety of belief; for if that be taken away the basis of faith is undermined, and the system totters to destruction.

2. Next there is ecclesiastical or dogmatic Christianity, usually associated with the name of Peter, which is apt to emphasise the efficacy of ceremonies, to regard material actions and priestly offices as essential to salvation, and to insist not only on their symbolic interpretation, but on some actual physical transformation, some bodily or material efficacy. It builds less upon an historic past, and more upon a present virtue residing in the Church, or accessible to and utilisable by the proper officers and dispensers of the means of grace. It feels the importance of times and seasons and buildings and sensuous representation; it is apt to concentrate attention on ecclesiastical details, with a zest for minutiæ, which, when compared with the vital issues at stake, strikes an outsider as rather pathetically humourous; and it sometimes so elaborates the material acts of worship, such as the sacraments, that they tend to take on the nature of incantation, and are occasionally performed by the priest alone, the congregation passively sharing in their mysterious and miraculous virtue.

3. Then there is the practical and energetic form of Christianity, usually associated with the name of James, which emphasises the virtue of good works and the importance of conduct, which regards belief and doctrine as of secondary importance, which seeks

no cloistered virtue, but throws itself vigorously into social movement, and endeavours both by word and deed to serve the brethren, and by active charity to ameliorate the lot of those whom it thinks of as Christ's poor.

4. Yet another variety is the mystical or emotional form of Christianity, usually associated with the name of John, which seeks by rapt adoration and worship of the Redeemer and love of all whom he has called his brethren—"even the least of these my brethren,"—to rise to the height of spiritual contemplation and ecstasy: tending somewhat in this its high quest to isolate itself from the world, in order to lose itself in an anticipation of heaven.

5. There exists also, one must admit, some trace of what may be called governing or hierarchical Christianity, which glorifies the priestly office, which seeks after temporal power, which regards the material prosperity of the Church as of more importance than the welfare of states and peoples, which joins hands with autocratic rulers for the oppression of the poor, which blesses and sustains violence, so it be used against the Church's enemies, which banishes and excommunicates the saints—even those of its own household,—and by corruption of the best succeeds in abetting the cause of the worst. This is the kind of Christianity which attracts the special notice of sceptics and scoffers; and most of the diatribes of good men against Christianity and the Christian ideal are based upon some confused apprehension of this ghastly and blasphemous travesty.

Whether it exists, here and there, in this country it is not for me to say, but it certainly has some existence in that country which must some day pass through the throes of an ultimately beneficent revolution—the country whose Church has excommunicated Tolstoi, and whose late Procurator of Holy Synod, in furtherance of what he conceived as legitimate ecclesiastical aggrandisement, exhorted the Czar to folly and wickedness in terms of fulsome and superstitious adulation.

6. Lastly and ostensibly the base of all these varieties—but how different from some of them,—there is the Christianity particularly exemplified and taught by that Syrian Carpenter, during his three years of public service, before his execution as a criminal blasphemer. The name of that gentle and pathetic figure has been used by the greater part of the Western world ever since, sometimes to sanctify enterprises of pity and tenderness, sometimes to cloak miserable ambitions, sometimes as a mere garment of respectability.

Whatever view we may take of this Personality, we can most of us recognise it as the greatest that has yet existed on this planet; hence, if it is through human nature that we can gradually grow to some dim conception of the majesty of the Eternal, it is the life and teachings of that greatest Prophet that we shall do well to study diligently when we wish to disentangle and display some of the secrets of the spiritual universe; and, by the saints, his words have always been recognised as the highest yet spoken on earth

concerning the relations between man and man and between man and God. It is certain that only a few of his utterances are contained in our documentary records, and it is probable that some of them have been mutilated and spoiled in transmission; nevertheless it is of interest to take those recorded words and see how far they countenance the various schemes or types of Christianity which have been based upon them. And in particular I wish to select those which seem to strengthen the case for either a partly material or a purely spiritual interpretation of Christianity.

First, to clear away the blasphemous use of Christ's name in association with political or temporal or hierarchical Christianity, the following will suffice:

"My kingdom is not of this world."

"Woe unto you, generation of vipers, that stoneth the prophets," etc.

"Ye make the commandments of God of none effect by your tradition."

There are many emphatic statements that religion is peculiarly a spiritual affair:

In favour of a spiritual form of religion

"God is a spirit, and they that worship him . . ."

"Neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem . . ."

"The words that I speak unto you they are spirit . . ."

"That born of flesh is flesh, of spirit is spirit."

"Ye make clean the outside of the cup."

"Pray in secret."

"Mint, anise, and cummin."

"The sabbath was made for man."

"Meat ye know not of."

"The kingdom of heaven is within you."

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

"It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

"How is it that ye do not understand?"

On the other hand, there are several texts which appear to support material accessories:

In favour of a ceremonial and material form of religion

"This is my body."

Baptism. "Suffer it to be so now."

"This kind goeth not out save by prayer and fasting." (Questionably genuine.)

Breaking of bread and giving thanks.

"Eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood."

"Spit and touched his tongue."

Anointing eyes.

Wedding garment (otherwise interpretable).

But the most numerous of the teachings have an immediately practical bearing:

In favour of a practical form of religion

Grapes and thistles.

Heal the broken-hearted, liberty to captives, etc.

"Inasmuch as ye did it . . ."

"Go and sell all that thou hast."

"Worketh hitherto, and I work."

"Well done, good and faithful . . ."

Do the will to know of the doctrine.

"Blessed is that servant who is found so doing."

Fruitless tree cut down.

"I was an hungered."

"Gather them that do iniquity . . ."

Sower and seed.

Good Samaritan.

"Casting out devils in thy name."

"Heareth and doeth."

Tree known by fruit. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

"They that have done good to the resurrection of life," etc.

"Not every one that saith Lord, Lord."

Cup of cold water.

"He that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother," etc.

"This do and thou shalt live."

In many statements the human side of the Messiah is specially emphasised:

Emphasising the human side of Christ

"The Son can do nothing of himself."

"I seek not my own will."

"I am come in my Father's name."
"He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory."
"He hath given me a commandment what I should say."
"Son of man."
"Why callest thou me good?"
"Ye both know me and know whence I am."
"As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."
(*Statements emphasising the Divine side will be referred to later.*)

A few texts, so far as they are genuine, can be appealed to as supporting ecclesiastical Christianity:

In favour of an ecclesiastical form of Christianity

"Keys of the kingdom of heaven."
"Sitting on twelve thrones judging," etc.
"Bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."
"If he refuses to hear the church, let him be," etc.

But it must be remembered that the frequency of expressions which, though full of meaning, can hardly be taken literally, but were so strongly figurative that even his Eastern associates were misled, is notorious:

Figurative expressions

"Hateth father and mother."
"Renounceth not all that he hath."
"Prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem."
"Let him sell his cloke and buy a sword."
"Not to give peace but a sword."
Camel through needle's eye.
"Sit on twelve thrones judging."
"Son coming in the clouds of heaven."
"This generation shall not pass away."
"I came not to judge the world."
"This is my body."
"Let the dead bury their dead."
"Come to me and drink."
"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."
"Remove mountains."
"Some standing here shall not taste of death."
"Keys of kingdom of heaven."
"Bread of life."
"Born again."
"Destroy temple."
"He that believeth is not judged."
"Eat my flesh and drink my blood."
"Everlasting fire."

If we endeavour to draw from all these texts a general deduction concerning the kind of religion intended and taught by the Founder of Christianity, I cannot but feel that the balance inclines strongly in the double direction of a spiritual interpretation on the theoretical side, combined with a thoroughly practical and simple outcome in daily life. These elements, the spiritual and the practical—the worship of God as a Spirit, and the service of man as a brother—are undoubted and emphatic constituents—the warp and the woof, as it were—of the pure Christian faith, but it is difficult to maintain that they are uniquely characteristic of it; even when taken together they can hardly be said to constitute a feature which sharply distinguishes it from all other religious creeds. For a still more fundamental substratum or framework—for a perception of the really characteristic and essential element in Christianity—we must look away from the detailed words and teachings and contemplate the Life as a whole.

VI. Ecce Deus

What, then, is the essential element in Christianity, the essential theoretical element which inspires its teachings on the ethical side? In the inculcation of practical righteousness other noble religions must be admitted to share, but there must be an element which it possesses in excess above others—some vital element which has enabled it to survive all the struggles for existence, and to dominate the most civilised peoples of the world.

A religion is necessarily compounded of many essences, and is sure to be mingled with foreign ingredients, some worthy, some unworthy; but these accessories cannot account for its vitality, for its adaptation to various ages, and for its acceptance by all conditions of men. A miraculous birth and resurrection were certainly not *distinctive* of Christianity; they have appeared in other religions too; we must look for some feature specially characteristic and quite fundamental.

I believe that the most essential element in Christianity is its conception of a human God; of a God, in the first place, not apart from the universe, not outside it and distinct from it but immanent in it; yet not immanent only, but actually incarnate, incarnate in it and revealed in the Incarnation.[1] The nature of God is displayed in part by everything, to those who have eyes to see, but is displayed most clearly and fully by the highest type of existence, the highest experience to which the process of evolution has so far opened our senses. By what else indeed can it conceivably be rendered manifest? Naturally the conception of Godhead is still only indistinct and par-

[1] It may appear hardly fair to treat the doctrine of Incarnation as an intensification of the doctrine of Immanence; inasmuch as some may consider them almost antithetic. Spinoza, for instance, held the one, but would assuredly have eschewed the other. I do not disagree, but point out that there is a tendency nowadays to strive rather towards a unification of the two doctrines. It may be admitted that emphasis on the philosophical notion of Immanence is comparatively recent on the part of theologians; but it can hardly ever have been completely absent from the Christian atmosphere, since St. Paul in his Athenian address clearly lent it his countenance, and it is implicit in the doctrine of the *Logos*.

tial, but so far as we are as yet able to grasp it, we must reach it through recognition of the extent and intricacy of the cosmos, and more particularly through the highest type and loftiest spiritual development of man himself.

This perception of a human God, or of a God in the form of humanity is a perception which welds together Christianity and Pantheism and Paganism and Philosophy. It has been seized and travestied by Comtists, whose God is rather limited to the human aspect instead of being only revealed through it. It has been preached by some Unitarians, though reverently denied by others and by Jews, who have felt that God could not be incarnate in man: "This be far from thee, Lord." It has been recognised and even exaggerated by Catholics, who have almost lost the humanity in the Divinity, though they tend to restore the balance by practical worship of the Mother and of canonical saints. But whatever its unconscious treatment by the sects may have been, this idea—the humanity of God or the Divinity of man—I conceive to be the truth which constituted the chief secret and inspiration of Jesus: "I and the Father are one." "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "The Son of Man," and equally "The Son of God." "Before Abraham was I am." "I am in the Father and the Father in me." And though admittedly "My Father is greater than I," yet "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; and "he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

The world has been slow to grasp the meaning of

all this. The conception of Godhead formed by some devout philosophers and mystics has quite rightly been so immeasurably vast, though still assuredly utterly inadequate and necessarily beneath reality, that the notion of a God revealed in human form—born, suffering, tormented, killed—has been utterly incredible. "A crucified prophet, yes; but a crucified God! I shudder at the blasphemy," [1] yet that apparent blasphemy is the soul of Christianity. It calls upon us to recognise and worship a crucified, an executed, God.

The genuine humanity of Christ is now manifest and clear enough, though that too has been in danger of being lost. There have been efforts to ignore it, and many to confuse it—attempts are still made to regard him as unique, rather than as the first-fruits of humanity, the first-born among many brethren.

Realisation of the genuine and straightforward humanity of Christ is obscured by a reverent misapprehension, akin in spirit to that which originated the Arian denial of his divinity. Both modes of thought shrank amazed from the suggestion that God can be really incarnate in, and manifested through, man: at any rate, not in normal man; such a thing only becomes permissible and credible if the Man is abnormal and unique, according to the orthodox view.

It is orthodox, therefore, to maintain that Christ's birth was miraculous and his death portentous, that he continued in existence otherwise than as we men continue, that his very body rose and ascended into

[1] Kingsley's *Hypatia*.

heaven,—whatever that collocation of words may mean. But I suggest that such an attempt at exceptional glorification of his body is a pious heresy—a heresy which misses the truth lying open to our eyes. His humanity is to be recognised as real and ordinary and thorough and complete: not in middle life alone, but at birth and at death and after death. Whatever happened to him may happen to any one of us, provided we attain the appropriate altitude: an altitude which, whether within our individual reach or not, is assuredly within reach of humanity. That is what he urged again and again. "Be born again." "Be ye perfect." "Ye are the sons of God." "My Father and your Father, my God and your God."

The *un*uniqueness of the ordinary humanity of Christ is the first and patent truth, masked only by well-meaning and reverent superstition. But the second truth is greater than that—without it the first would be meaningless and useless,—if man alone, what gain have we? The world is full of men. What the world wants is a God. Behold the God!

The Divinity of Jesus is the truth which now requires to be re-perceived, to be illumined afresh by new knowledge, to be cleansed and revivified by the wholesome flood of scepticism which has poured over it; it can be freed now from all trace of grovelling superstition, and can be recognised freely and enthusiastically: the Divinity of Jesus, and of all other noble and saintly souls, in so far as they too have been inflamed by a spark of Deity—in so far as they too can be recognised as manifestations of the Divine. Nor

is it even through man alone that the revelation comes, though through man and the highest man it comes chiefly; the revelation is implicit in all the processes of nature, and explicit too, so far as human vision, in the person of its seers and poets and men of science, has been as yet sufficiently cleared and strengthened to perceive it.

For consider what is involved in the astounding idea of Evolution and Progress as applied to the whole universe. Either it is a fact or it is a dream. If it be a fact, what an illuminating fact it is! God is one; the universe is an aspect and a revelation of God. The universe is struggling upward to a perfection not yet attained. I see in the mighty process of evolution an eternal struggle towards more and more self-perception, and fuller and more all-embracing Existence —not only on the part of what is customarily spoken of as Creation—but, in so far as Nature is an aspect and revelation of God, and in so far as Time has any ultimate meaning or significance, we must dare to extend the thought of growth and progress and development even up to the height of all that we can realise of the Supernal Being. In some parts of the universe perhaps already the ideal conception has been attained; and the region of such attainment—the full blaze of self-conscious Deity—is too bright for mortal eyes, is utterly beyond our highest thoughts; but in part the attainment is as yet very imperfect; in what we know as the material part, which is our present home, it is nascent, or only just beginning; and our own struggles and efforts and

disappointments and aspirations—the felt groaning and travailing of Creation—these are evidence of the effort, indeed they themselves are part of the effort, towards fuller and completer and more conscious existence.[1] On this planet man is the highest outcome of the process so far, and is therefore the highest representation of Deity that here exists. Terribly imperfect as yet, because so recently evolved, he is nevertheless a being which has at length attained to consciousness and free-will, a being unable to be coerced by the whole force of the universe, against his will; a spark of the Divine Spirit, therefore, never more to be quenched. Open still to awful horrors, to agonies of remorse, but to floods of joy also he persists, and his destiny is largely in his own hands; he may proceed up or down, he may advance towards a magnificent ascendancy, he may recede towards depths of infamy. He is not coerced: he is guided and influenced, but he is free to choose. The evil and the good are necessary correlatives; freedom to choose the one involves freedom to choose the other.

So it must have been elsewhere, amid the depths of cosmic space, myriads of times over in all the vistas of the past; and thus may have arisen legends of the

[1] So, in Professor Gilbert Murray's version of "The Trojan women" of Euripides,—whose tragedies represent a parting of the ways between an old theology and a new,—the tortured Queen Hecuba turns from the gods that know but help not, to the majesty of her own immeasurable grief, and in a moment of exalted vision perceives that even through her sorrow life had somehow been enriched, and that though Troy was burning and the race of Priam extinct, they had attained immortality in ways undreamed of, and would add to the harmony of the eternal music.

evolution of what are popularly called angels, some ascendant in the struggle, others fallen by their own rebellion. Let it not be supposed that these instinctive legends are based on nothing: they are a pictorial travesty doubtless, but they are not gratuitous inventions; it is doubtful if entirely baseless or purely gratuitous inventions would have any vitality, every living idea must surely be based upon something; these correspond to something innate in the ideas of humanity, because embedded in the structure of the universe of which that humanity is a part.

A question presses on the optimist for answer therefore: Are the rebellious and the sinful not also on the up grade? Ultimately and in the last resort will not they too put themselves in tune with the harmony of existence? Who is to say? Time is infinite, eternity is before us as well as behind us, and the end is not yet. There is no "ultimately" in the matter, for there is no end: there is room for an eternity of rebellion and degradation and misery, as well as for one of joy and hope and love. We can see that virtue and happiness must be on the winning side, while crime is a fruit of arrested development, or reversion to an ancestral type; we can perceive that vice contains suicidal elements, while every step in an upward direction increases the potential energy of the moral universe; yet clearly there is to be no compulsion; the door of hope is not closed, but it must of free-will be entered, and good and evil will be intermingled with us for many æons yet. The law of progress by struggle and effort is not soon to be abrogated and replaced by a

Nirvana of passive contemplation. There is too much to do in this busy universe, and all must help. The universe is not a "being" but a "becoming"—an ancient but light-bringing doctrine when realised,—it is in change, in development, in movement, upward and downward, that activity consists. A stationary condition, or stagnation, would to us be simple non-existence; the element of progression, of change, of activity, must be as durable as the universe itself. Monotony, in the sense of absolute immobility, is unthinkable, unreal, and cannot anywhere exist: save where things have ceased to be.

Such ideas, the ideas of development and progress, extend even up to God Himself, according to the Christian conception. So we return to that with which we started: The Christian idea of God is not that of a being outside the universe, above its struggles and advances, looking on and taking no part in the process, *solely* exalted, beneficent, self-determined and complete; no, it is also that of a God who loves, who yearns, who suffers, who keenly laments the rebellious and misguided activity of the free agents brought into being by Himself as part of Himself, who enters into the storm and conflict, and is subject to conditions as the Soul of it all; conditions not artificial and transitory, but inherent in the process of producing free and conscious beings, and essential to the full self-development even of Deity.

It is a marvellous and bewildering thought, but whatever its value, and whether it be an ultimate revelation or not, it is the revelation of Christ. Whether

it be considered blasphemous or not—and in his own day it was certainly considered blasphemous—this was the idea he grasped during those forty days of solitary communion, and never subsequently let go.

This is the truth which has been reverberating down the ages ever since; it has been the hidden inspiration of saint, apostle, prophet, martyr, and, in however dim and vague a form, has given hope and consolation to the unlettered and poverty-stricken millions:—A God that could understand, that could suffer, that could sympathise, that had felt the extremity of human anguish, the agony of bereavement, had submitted even to the brutal hopeless torture of the innocent, and had become acquainted with the pangs of death,—this has been the chief consolation of the Christian religion. This is the extraordinary conception of Godhead to which we have thus far risen. "This is my beloved Son." The Christian God is revealed as the incarnate spirit of humanity, or rather the incarnate spirit of humanity is recognised as a real intrinsic part of God. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you":—surely one of the most inspired utterances of antiquity.

Infinitely patient the Universe has been while man has groped his way to this truth: so simple and consoling in one of its aspects, so inconceivable and incredible in another. Dimly and partially it has been seen by all the prophets, and doubtless by many of the pagan saints. Dimly and partially we see it now; but in the life-blood of Christianity this is the most vital element. It is not likely to be the attribute of

any one religion alone, it may be the essence of truth in all terrestrial religions but it is conspicuously Christian. Its boldest statement was when a child was placed in the midst and was regarded as a symbol of the Deity; but it was fore-shadowed even in the early conceptions of Olympus, whose gods and goddesses were affected with the passions of men; it is the root fact underlying the superstitions of idolatry and all varieties of anthropomorphism. "Thou shalt have none other gods but me": and with dim eyes and dull ears and misunderstanding hearts men have sought to obey the commandment, seeking after God if haply they might find Him; while all the time their God was very nigh unto them, in their midst and of their fellowship sympathising with their struggles, rejoicing in their successes, and evoking even in their own poor nature some dim and broken image of Himself.

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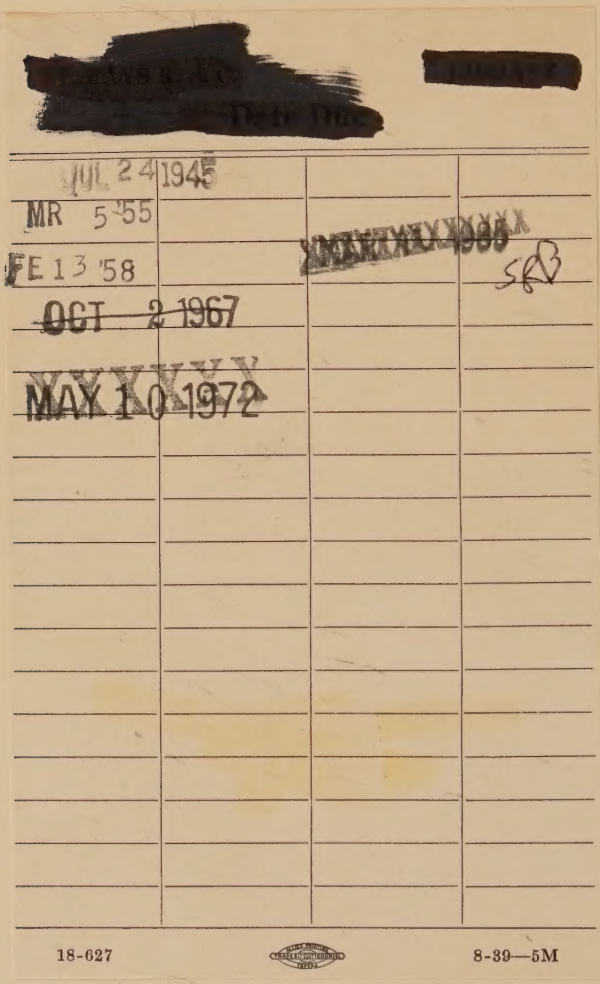
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